Strengthening Children's Social Development Through Family Communication and Early Childhood Education

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ABSTRACT: *Family communication and Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD) play important roles in supporting children's social development during early childhood. This study examines how communication between parents and children contributes to children's emotional adjustment, social interaction, and participation within PAUD settings in Bekasi. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed involving 30 families and 10 PAUD teachers selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, while thematic analysis was applied to identify recurring communication patterns and social behaviours. Results demonstrated that supportive parent–child communication strengthened children's emotional confidence, classroom participation, and peer interaction. Consistent emotional communication also contributed positively to children's social adaptation and behavioural regulation within educational environments. Collaboration between parents and teachers further supported continuity between home and school communication practices. Several challenges nevertheless emerged, including limited parental availability, inconsistent participation in school activities, and communication patterns that focused more on academic instruction than emotional interaction. Findings highlight the importance of communication-centred approaches in strengthening children's social competence within urban early childhood education contexts.*

ABSTRAK: Komunikasi keluarga dan *Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* (PAUD) memiliki peran penting dalam mendukung perkembangan sosial anak pada masa awal kehidupan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana komunikasi antara orang tua dan anak berkontribusi terhadap penyesuaian emosional, interaksi sosial, dan partisipasi anak dalam lingkungan PAUD di Bekasi. Pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif digunakan dengan melibatkan 30 keluarga dan 10 guru PAUD yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik untuk mengidentifikasi pola komunikasi dan perilaku sosial yang muncul. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi suportif antara orang tua dan anak memperkuat kepercayaan diri emosional, partisipasi kelas, dan interaksi sosial anak. Komunikasi emosional yang konsisten juga mendukung kemampuan adaptasi sosial dan regulasi perilaku anak dalam lingkungan pendidikan. Kolaborasi antara orang tua dan guru turut memperkuat kesinambungan komunikasi antara rumah dan sekolah. Namun demikian, keterbatasan waktu orang tua, rendahnya partisipasi sekolah, dan komunikasi yang lebih berorientasi akademik dibandingkan emosional masih menjadi tantangan dalam pengembangan sosial anak.

Keywords: *family communication, early childhood education, social development, parental involvement, PAUD*

I. INTRODUCTION

Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD) has become a crucial foundation for children's long-term academic, emotional, and social development. Early childhood represents a period of rapid cognitive and behavioural growth that strongly influences future learning capacities and interpersonal adjustment. Educational experiences that correspond with developmental needs can strengthen communication abilities, emotional regulation, and social competence while simultaneously encouraging positive character formation (Wijaya & Yatmin, 2023). Growing public awareness regarding the importance of early intervention has also increased the establishment of PAUD institutions in urban areas such as Bekasi.

Meaningful interaction within early childhood education environments contributes significantly to children's readiness for formal education and wider social participation. Holistic learning approaches that integrate emotional, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions are increasingly recognised as essential components of quality early childhood education (OECD, 2021). Educational institutions are not only expected to improve academic preparedness but also to nurture children's confidence, empathy, and communication skills. Such developmental support becomes particularly important in densely populated urban communities where children encounter diverse social experiences from an early age.

Family environments remain the earliest social context in which children develop emotional attachment, behavioural patterns, and interpersonal understanding. Parents function as children's first educators, introducing communication practices, moral values, and social norms through everyday interaction. Harmonious family relationships may strengthen children's emotional security and psychological stability, whereas prolonged parental conflict can negatively influence behavioural and emotional adjustment (Napitupulu & Julio, 2023). Emotional support within families consequently plays an important role in helping children adapt socially within educational settings and peer relationships.

Open communication between parents and children is closely associated with children's emotional well-being and social confidence. Supportive interaction encourages children to express feelings, communicate needs, and participate more actively in social environments. Research conducted during the COVID-19 period demonstrated that family resilience and responsive communication patterns significantly affected children's emotional adaptation during social disruption (Prime et al., 2020). Similar findings were reported by Hu et al. (2023), who identified that the duration and quality of parent–child communication influenced levels of anxiety and emotional distress among children during isolation periods.

Educational psychology perspectives further explain that motivation influences behavioural persistence, learning orientation, and individual achievement (Khoiriyah & Philosophy, 2024). Motivation should therefore be cultivated from an early age through positive parental guidance and emotionally supportive communication (Wahy, 2012). Parents may encourage children's enthusiasm for learning by establishing constructive routines, appreciating achievements, and assisting children in overcoming educational challenges (Justicia, 2017). Bartlett et al. (2020)

additionally emphasised that emotionally responsive family communication supports children's psychological well-being and strengthens their capacity to manage stress and uncertainty.

Parental participation has increasingly become an important element within contemporary early childhood education practices. Collaboration between families and educational institutions enables children to receive consistent emotional and developmental support across home and school environments. Participation theory explains that active involvement in collective educational processes strengthens relationships and improves developmental outcomes (Arifuddin, 2020). Parenting education programmes have also demonstrated positive contributions towards improving children's social-emotional development and communication skills during early childhood (Suprijanto et al., 2022).

Social challenges affecting children's development continue to increase alongside changing family and community dynamics. Limited parental supervision, weak emotional attachment, and inadequate communication patterns may increase children's vulnerability to behavioural difficulties and social maladjustment (Sari et al., 2024). Additional factors such as poverty, inappropriate media exposure, and insufficient age-appropriate education further contribute to developmental risks among children (Suciyati & Masrita, 2020; Wahy, 2012). Research also indicates that children who receive supportive communication from parents and teachers tend to develop stronger resilience and social competence when encountering environmental challenges (Arifuddin & Ilham, 2020; Eadie et al., 2021).

Limited studies have specifically examined how family communication within PAUD settings contributes to strengthening children's social development in Indonesian urban communities, particularly in Bekasi. Existing research commonly discusses parenting, educational achievement, or communication practices separately without analysing communication as a relational process shaping children's social competence. Attention towards collaboration between parents and educators within early childhood education contexts also remains relatively underexplored. Guided by these gaps, the present study investigates how family communication supports children's social development within PAUD institutions in Bekasi, how parents and teachers collaborate in facilitating social interaction, and what communication challenges emerge during educational implementation.

II. METHOD

Research Design and Participants

A qualitative descriptive approach was employed to examine how family communication and *Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* (PAUD) contribute to children's social development within early childhood education settings in Bekasi. Qualitative inquiry was considered suitable because it enables deeper exploration of communication patterns, emotional interaction, and social experiences occurring between children, parents, and teachers. Emphasis was placed on understanding communication practices that support children's social adjustment during early childhood.

Purposive sampling was applied to select participants who possessed relevant experiences related to family communication and children's educational development. Selection criteria included parental educational background, socio-economic conditions, and active involvement in

children's learning activities within PAUD institutions. Participants consisted of parents, teachers, and children enrolled in several kindergarten institutions in Bekasi. Detailed participant characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant Characteristics

Participant Category	Number of Participants	Selection Criteria
Parents	30	Active involvement in children's education and communication practices
Teachers	10	Minimum two years of teaching experience in PAUD institutions
Children	30	Enrolled in kindergarten institutions in Bekasi

Family participation was considered important because parents and teachers represent the primary environments influencing children's communication behaviour and social development. Involving multiple participant groups enabled broader understanding regarding interaction patterns occurring within both home and school settings. Such participant variation also supported richer interpretation of communication practices influencing children's social competence and emotional development.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents and teachers to explore family communication patterns, parental involvement in children's education, and children's social interaction within PAUD environments. Interview discussions focused on emotional communication, behavioural guidance, learning support, and collaboration between families and schools.

Participant observation was undertaken during classroom activities and informal interaction among children, teachers, and parents within kindergarten settings in Bekasi. Observation enabled the identification of communication behaviour, peer interaction, emotional responses, and participation during learning activities. Document analysis was additionally conducted using child development reports, teacher notes, PAUD learning programmes, and school communication records related to parental involvement and children's developmental progress.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis procedures. Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and analysed together with observational field notes and institutional documents. Coding procedures were employed to identify recurring themes associated with family communication, emotional support, social interaction, and collaboration between parents and teachers. Emerging themes were subsequently categorised to interpret communication practices influencing children's social development within PAUD contexts.

Several strategies were applied to strengthen research credibility and data trustworthiness. Triangulation was conducted by comparing findings obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Ethical principles were maintained by obtaining informed consent from all participants prior to data collection and protecting participant confidentiality throughout the

research process. All collected data were used solely for academic purposes and stored anonymously to ensure participants' privacy and security.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Patterns of Parent–Child Communication

Communication patterns between parents and children played an important role in shaping children's social behaviour within PAUD environments in Bekasi. Families who maintained regular and supportive interaction with their children generally demonstrated stronger emotional attachment and more responsive communication practices. Children from these families appeared more confident when interacting with teachers and peers during both formal learning sessions and informal social activities.

Daily communication commonly occurred through conversations regarding school experiences, emotional conditions, friendships, and children's activities at home. Consistent communication encouraged children to express opinions and feelings more openly while also strengthening emotional closeness within the family environment. Children who frequently received verbal encouragement from parents tended to participate more actively during collaborative classroom activities and peer interaction.

"Children who often communicate with their parents usually show better confidence in class. They are more active when speaking, easier to approach socially, and more willing to participate during group activities." (Interview with PAUD teacher)

Supportive communication patterns were also associated with children's emotional regulation and interpersonal adjustment within educational settings. Children who received emotional attention from parents were generally more capable of expressing feelings appropriately and resolving minor social conflict independently. Emotional openness within families appeared to strengthen children's sense of security during interaction with peers and teachers.

"At home, I always ask my child about activities at school and how they feel after class. Since we started talking more often, my child has become more confident and easier to socialise with friends." (Interview with parent participant)

Communication was additionally perceived by parents as an important strategy for understanding children's emotional experiences and behavioural changes. Parents who maintained regular communication routines believed that children became more comfortable discussing friendships, learning difficulties, and personal concerns. Such interaction patterns enabled parents to provide emotional reassurance and behavioural guidance more effectively in everyday situations.

"Sometimes children do not directly tell us when they have problems. Communication needs to be built slowly every day, especially after school activities, so they feel safe sharing their feelings." (Interview with parent participant)

Differences were also visible between children who experienced active communication at home and those who received limited parental interaction. Children with limited communication exposure tended to demonstrate lower classroom participation, reduced emotional expression, and weaker engagement during peer interaction. In several cases, inconsistent communication

between parents and children appeared to influence children's confidence and emotional responsiveness within social learning environments.

Social Interaction in PAUD Settings

Social interaction within PAUD settings reflected notable differences in children's communication confidence, emotional responsiveness, and participation during classroom activities. Children who received consistent emotional support and communication at home generally adapted more easily to group learning environments. Active participation was visible through collaborative play, willingness to share learning materials, and confidence when communicating with teachers and peers during classroom discussions.

"Some children are very expressive when interacting with friends and teachers. They are usually more confident speaking in front of the class and can adapt more quickly during group activities." (Interview with PAUD teacher)

Classroom interaction also demonstrated that children's communication abilities influenced their capacity to manage social situations and peer relationships. Several children showed stronger emotional control when facing disagreement or competition during learning activities. Cooperative behaviour, empathy, and willingness to help classmates were more frequently demonstrated by children who appeared emotionally secure within classroom environments.

"Children who receive enough attention at home are usually calmer and easier to guide socially. They tend to communicate their feelings instead of reacting aggressively when conflicts happen." (Interview with PAUD teacher)

Patterns of social engagement were additionally reflected in children's participation during structured and unstructured activities. Some children actively initiated conversation and interacted comfortably with peers, while others remained passive and hesitant during social interaction. Limited communication confidence often influenced children's willingness to participate in collaborative learning and peer discussion activities.

Several teachers also observed that emotional support from families contributed to children's classroom adjustment and interaction quality. Children who experienced supportive communication at home appeared more prepared to follow classroom routines, cooperate during group activities, and express emotions appropriately. Positive communication experiences within families seemed to strengthen children's social confidence and emotional stability in educational settings.

"My child used to be quiet and avoid interacting with classmates. After we started spending more time talking and listening to their stories at home, they became more active and comfortable joining activities at school." (Interview with parent participant)

Social interaction challenges nevertheless remained visible among several children, particularly those who received limited parental attention or inconsistent emotional communication at home. Some children demonstrated withdrawal during peer interaction, reduced participation during classroom discussion, and difficulty expressing emotional needs appropriately. Such conditions affected not only classroom engagement but also children's ability to develop stable social relationships within PAUD environments.

Barriers to Educational Communication

Educational communication between families and PAUD institutions was influenced by several challenges related to parental availability, communication consistency, and participation in school activities. Limited time caused by work responsibilities frequently reduced opportunities for parents to engage in regular interaction with children after school activities. In several cases, communication between parents and children became largely instructional and focused mainly on academic routines rather than emotional discussion or social experiences.

Communication barriers were also visible in the relationship between parents and teachers within PAUD settings. Several teachers explained that some parents rarely participated in school programmes or followed children's social development consistently. Limited parental involvement occasionally created difficulties for teachers in monitoring children's behavioural changes and emotional adjustment outside the classroom environments. Inconsistent communication between schools and families additionally affected the continuity of behavioural guidance provided to children.

Differences in parenting approaches and communication expectations further contributed to educational communication challenges. Some parents prioritised academic achievement while giving less attention to children's emotional expression and social interaction. Several children consequently demonstrated hesitation during peer engagement, difficulty expressing emotions, and reduced confidence during classroom participation. Communication gaps between home and school environments appeared to influence children's behavioural consistency and social adaptation within PAUD contexts.

Taken together, the results demonstrated that communication patterns within families and educational environments substantially influenced children's social development in PAUD settings. Supportive parent–child interaction contributed positively to children's emotional confidence, peer engagement, and classroom participation, while limited communication and inconsistent parental involvement tended to hinder children's social adjustment. Collaboration between parents and teachers additionally emerged as an important factor in strengthening communication practices that support children's emotional and interpersonal development within early childhood education environments in Bekasi.

DISCUSSION

Communication patterns within families were closely associated with children's social confidence and emotional adjustment within PAUD environments in Bekasi. Supportive interaction between parents and children appeared to strengthen children's ability to participate in classroom communication, peer interaction, and collaborative learning activities. Similar patterns have been identified in previous studies demonstrating that responsive family communication contributes positively to children's emotional resilience and social adaptation during early childhood (Prime et al., 2020; Hu et al., 2023). Emotional support within family interaction consequently functions not only as interpersonal attachment but also as a mechanism shaping children's behavioural readiness within educational environments.

Emotional communication additionally influenced children's sense of security and willingness to express feelings during social interaction. Children who experienced consistent emotional support at home appeared more capable of communicating needs, responding to peer interaction, and regulating emotional responses during classroom activities. Bartlett et al. (2020)

argued that emotionally responsive communication supports children's psychological well-being and emotional stability, particularly during periods of social uncertainty. Similar observations were also reflected in studies highlighting that positive family relationships contribute significantly to children's confidence, emotional security, and behavioural development (Napitupulu & Julio, 2023; Zenaida et al., 2023).

Patterns identified in the present study further demonstrated that communication within families contributed to children's learning motivation and classroom engagement. Regular interaction regarding school experiences and emotional conditions encouraged children to participate more actively during educational activities and social collaboration. Educational psychology perspectives similarly explain that motivation influences behavioural persistence and learning orientation among children (Khoiriyah & Philosophy, 2024). Supportive parental communication may therefore strengthen children's enthusiasm for learning, particularly when parents provide encouragement, behavioural guidance, and emotional appreciation during daily interaction (Wahy, 2012; Justicia, 2017).

Communication practices observed within PAUD environments also reflected broader processes of children's social development and interpersonal adaptation. Children who received emotional reassurance from parents demonstrated stronger cooperation, empathy, and communication confidence during classroom activities. Such patterns correspond with arguments emphasising that social experiences during early childhood contribute significantly to children's emotional resilience and interpersonal competence (Arifuddin & Ilham, 2020). Holistic approaches within early childhood education environments further encourage meaningful interaction and social participation as important foundations for long-term developmental readiness (OECD, 2021).

Parental involvement emerged as another important factor strengthening children's social and educational development within PAUD settings. Active communication between parents and educational institutions enabled children to receive more consistent emotional and behavioural support across home and school environments. Similar findings have been reported in studies demonstrating that parental engagement positively influences children's school readiness, emotional development, and classroom participation (Barnett et al., 2020; Cutshaw et al., 2022; Yamamoto et al., 2006). Family involvement additionally contributes to stronger continuity between educational expectations at school and communication practices within family environments.

Collaboration between parents and teachers also appeared important in supporting children's classroom engagement and social adjustment. Communication between educational institutions and families enabled teachers to better understand children's behavioural conditions, emotional needs, and interpersonal difficulties. Such collaboration strengthens educational consistency and improves opportunities for monitoring children's developmental progress. Previous studies similarly emphasised that family–school relationships contribute positively to preschool children's classroom participation and social engagement within educational settings (Shen, 2025; Muthmainnah et al., 2024).

Family participation within early childhood education environments should not be interpreted merely as attendance during school activities. Communication quality, emotional responsiveness, and continuity of interaction between home and school environments are equally important in

shaping children's developmental experiences. Otero-Mayer et al. (2025) explained that family involvement in early childhood education includes multidimensional interaction processes extending beyond administrative participation. Comparable observations were identified in the present study, where children demonstrated stronger social confidence when communication practices between parents and teachers occurred consistently and collaboratively. Parenting education programmes also contribute positively towards improving parental awareness regarding communication practices supporting children's social-emotional development (Suprijanto et al., 2022).

Urban family dynamics nevertheless created several communication challenges affecting children's social development within PAUD contexts in Bekasi. Limited parental availability due to work responsibilities frequently reduced opportunities for emotionally meaningful interaction with children. Communication within several families consequently became more instructional and academically oriented rather than emotionally supportive. Similar challenges were identified among early childhood educators who experienced increased emotional and professional pressure while attempting to maintain communication with families during periods of educational adjustment (Eadie et al., 2021). Communication barriers of this nature may weaken children's emotional attachment and reduce opportunities for social guidance within family environments.

Additional challenges were associated with inconsistent parental participation, digital distraction, and unequal understanding regarding children's developmental needs. Several parents prioritised academic achievement while giving less attention to emotional communication and social interaction. Such tendencies may contribute to reduced emotional openness and weaker interpersonal confidence among children. Previous studies similarly identified that limited parental supervision, inadequate communication, and inappropriate media exposure may increase children's vulnerability to behavioural difficulties and social maladjustment (Sari et al., 2024; Suciyati & Masrita, 2020). Technological development within educational environments additionally requires balanced communication practices to ensure that children's emotional and social development remains prioritised alongside digital learning adaptation (Hasanah & Fajri, 2022).

Attention towards family engagement within early childhood education has increasingly expanded across international educational contexts. Research has demonstrated that parental involvement policies, home literacy environments, and family-centred educational programmes contribute positively to children's educational and social outcomes (Oliveira et al., 2024; Kaya et al., 2025). Family engagement programmes additionally strengthen communication consistency between educational institutions and households while improving parental awareness regarding children's developmental needs (Chen et al., 2026). Taken together, the present study contributes to the growing discussion regarding family communication and early childhood education by demonstrating that children's social development within PAUD settings is shaped not only by educational instruction but also by the quality of emotional communication, collaborative interaction, and relational support occurring between families and schools.

IV. CONCLUSION

Family communication emerged as a central element influencing children's social development within PAUD environments in Bekasi. Supportive interaction between parents and children contributed to stronger emotional confidence, improved peer engagement, and greater participation during classroom activities. Communication practices characterised by emotional openness, consistency, and responsiveness enabled children to adapt more effectively within educational and social environments. Educational development during early childhood should therefore be understood not only through cognitive achievement but also through the quality of relational interaction surrounding children's everyday experiences.

Collaboration between families and educational institutions also played an important role in strengthening children's social competence and emotional adjustment. Consistent communication between parents and teachers supported continuity between home and school environments, allowing children to receive more stable emotional guidance and behavioural support. Family participation within PAUD settings consequently extends beyond administrative involvement and includes ongoing interaction, emotional responsiveness, and shared developmental responsibility between schools and households. Such findings reinforce the importance of communication-centred educational approaches within urban early childhood education contexts.

Several communication barriers nevertheless continued to influence children's social development processes. Limited parental availability, inconsistent participation in school activities, and greater emphasis on academic performance than emotional interaction reduced opportunities for meaningful communication within some families. Communication gaps between homes and educational institutions additionally affected behavioural consistency and children's social adaptation within classroom environments. Rapid social change and increasing technological exposure further highlight the need for balanced communication practices that prioritise emotional interaction alongside educational achievement during early childhood.

Contribution of the present study lies in positioning family communication as a relational and developmental process within PAUD contexts rather than merely as parental supervision or educational support. Research findings provide contextual understanding regarding how emotional communication, collaborative interaction, and educational participation collectively shape children's social competence within urban Indonesian communities, particularly in Bekasi. Greater attention towards communication quality within family–school relationships may therefore contribute to the development of more inclusive and socially responsive early childhood education practices. Future research may expand these findings by examining communication dynamics across broader socio-cultural contexts and different educational environments in indonesia.

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