

# Implementation of a Practical Life Program to Improve the Independence of Group B Children

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## Abstract

*Purpose:* This study aims to explore the influence of *Practical Life* activities on the development of independence in early childhood, specifically focusing on children aged 5–6 years at BA Aisyiyah Jetis III Sukoharjo. The research highlights how early independence can shape confident, intelligent, and self-reliant individuals ready to face future challenges.

*Methodology:* This research employed a qualitative approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and verification. The implementation of the *Practical Life* program was examined in three stages: planning, execution during school routines, and assessment.

*Results:* The findings indicate that *Practical Life* activities—rooted in the Montessori method—effectively support the development of children's independence. These activities, embedded in everyday routines such as self-care, organizing materials, and simple household tasks, help children internalize independent behaviors naturally. The consistent application of these activities during school hours contributed significantly to students' growing independence.

*Applications/Originality/Value:* This study offers practical insights for early childhood educators and parents on how simple, daily routines can be powerful tools for fostering independence in children. It contributes to the growing body of literature supporting Montessori-based methods in PAUD (Early Childhood Education) institutions and provides a model that can be replicated in similar educational settings.

## Introduction

Children are a very valuable asset for every parent. As parents, of course you want your children to grow and develop well and be able to receive education that can develop good morals, morals and character. There are several character education values that need to be developed, including the value of independent personality character. Early childhood education needs to be organized with the aim of providing and facilitating the stimulation of children's growth and development as well as instilling or emphasizing children's behavior and personality that is virtuous, noble, self-confident, brave and independent.

Montessori from Heinstock explains that early childhood begins to pass through the golden age between the ages of birth and 6 years, which is when children begin to enter the stage of acceptance and acceptance of various stimuli (Ariyanti, 2016). This sensitive period is a time when physical and psychological functions mature, where children must begin to stimulate the stimuli provided by their environment. This sensitive stage provides the first foundation for education and development of thinking, language, physical motor, social-emotional and artistic abilities. At times like this, children need attention and education to develop aspects of their development. (Laela & Rohmah, 2022). NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) states that early childhood includes children aged 0 to 8 years who take part in educational programs including child care, family care, early childhood education, private and public, kindergarten, and elementary school (SD) (Suryana, 2021). In essence, early childhood education is a training program for children from birth to six years of age, which aims to provide physical and mental growth through continuous learning to prepare children for the future and education to encourage development (Permendikbud RI, 2013). Education that must be instilled as early as possible in early childhood is about character education, one of which is an independent attitude in children.

Independence is an important life skill and is needed from an early age. Developing children's independence requires a gradual process depending on their age. (Putri & Lestari, 2021). Independence in children needs to be introduced and trained as early as possible. Therefore, to train and introduce independence to children, educators need to understand what can influence children's independence and how to develop their independence. The sooner a child practices independently mastering developmental tasks, the easier it is for him to acquire and consolidate his values and skills (Khotijah, 2018). Development. Independence in children aged 0-6 years (early age) can be seen from the process of getting used to the

child's behavior and physical abilities. According to Yamin and Sanan, "Independence and physical function refer to independence in terms of meeting needs. For example, a child needs to eat, then the child must be able to eat independently. Children learn to dress themselves and get used to cleaning themselves (bathing and toilet)." (Yusra et al., 2020). BA Aisyiyah Jetis III Sukoharjo provides early childhood education in the city area. The researcher carried out an observation and interview process with several parents of students who attended BA Aisyiyah Jetis III and found that the children lacked independence in carrying out daily activities. Preliminary data shows that of the 11 children aged 5-6 years who participated in BA Aisyiyah Jetis III (around 60%) had less developed independence. The majority of children tended to rely on help from adults to carry out eating and drinking activities, putting on and taking off their own shoes, wearing clothes, toilet training, brushing teeth and other independence. This is a problem that must be solved by educators so that children can learn independently effectively. In increasing children's independence, there are challenges that need to be faced. Several factors that influence children's lack of independence, such as a lack of appropriate stimulation and the tendency of parents or educators to do everything for the child's comfort, can influence the development of independence. This is supported by Sri Lestari and Kartika Nur Hu who said that it is not only teachers who encourage children's independence, but families also play an important role in fostering children's independence (Lestari dan Fathiyah, 2023). Therefore, implementing an appropriate PAUD program is very necessary for the process of increasing the independence of children aged 5-6 years. One of the PAUD programs that attracts attention is "Practical Life".

The Practical Life program is a solution as an alternative that can foster the independent character of children aged 5 - 6 years at BA Aisyiyah Jetis III. Based on previous research, this program also aims to make children more independent and improve body control and coordination (Amari, 2023). This has also been proven to be effective in supporting the development of children's physical and mental skills at preschool age, namely 5-6 years, and can be a solution to the obstacles felt by children or PAUD educational institutions. Therefore, research on the implementation of the practical life program in fostering independent character in children aged 5-6 years in the PAUD BA Aisyiyah Jetis III unit is very interesting to study. The Practical Life program is based on the Montessori education theory developed by Dr. Maria Montessori. Some of the main principles underlying this program are: 1. Learning Through Experience: Children learn best when they are directly involved in activities, not just through verbal instruction, 2. The Importance of an Organized Environment: An organized and engaging environment allows children to explore and learn in an independent way, 3. Child Readiness: Activities are designed according to the child's developmental stage, so that the child feels ready and motivated to learn, 4. Teacher's Role as Facilitator: In the Montessori approach, the teacher acts as a facilitator who provides support and guidance without intervening in the process children's learning.

The Practical Life program aims to: 1) Build Independence: Children are taught basic skills that enable them to carry out daily tasks without adult assistance, 2) Fine Motor Skills Development: Activities such as pouring, tying and tidying help children develop hand coordination and eyes, 3) Social Learning: Through interaction in activities, children learn to share, take turns, and cooperate, 4) Strengthening the Sense of Responsibility: Children are taught to care for their environment, which builds a sense of responsibility and concern for others, 5) Improved Concentration and Focus: Specially designed activities help children learn to concentrate and complete tasks.

Implementation of the Practical Life program can be done through several steps: 1) Creation of a Supportive Environment: Prepare a safe and organized classroom or study area with appropriate tools and materials, 2) Selection of Activities: Choose varied activities, such as sweeping, tidying, and prepare simple meals, 3) Observation and Adjustment: Observe children's interests and development to adapt activities to their abilities, 4) Reflection and Discussion: Invite children to share their experiences after carrying out activities, to strengthen learning and increase self-awareness.

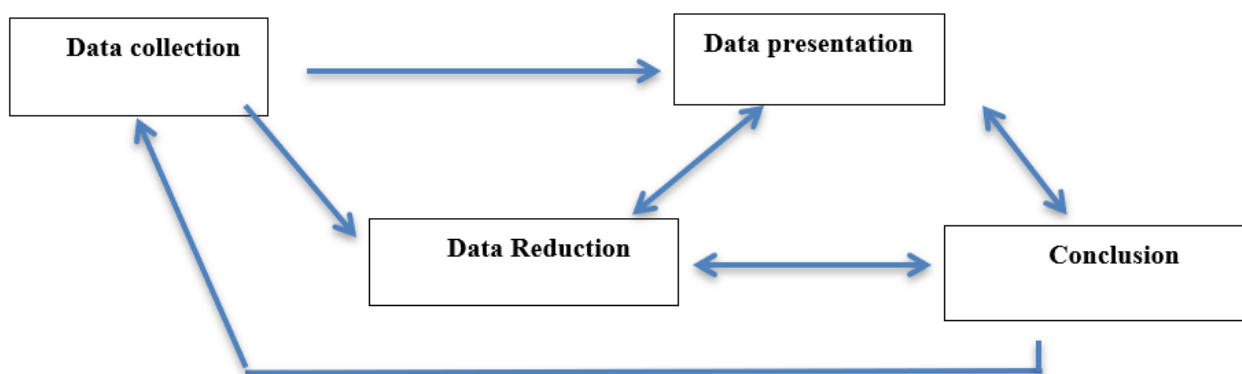
With this, PAUD BA Aisyiyah Jetis III implements a practical life program. The practical life program carried out at PAUD BA Aisyiyah Jetis III starts at 07.00-11.00. When the children come, they get used to taking off and putting their shoes on the shelf, taking ablution for the Dhuha prayer, at 08.00 doing learning activities until 10.00 by getting the children used to tidying up toys that have been used, at 10.00 preparing meals, before eating the children get used to wash their hands first, children do eating and drinking activities independently, at 10.30 children do toilet training activities and prepare/put away their bags independently, at 10.45 children prepare to go home, recaling until at 11.00 it's time to go home. Therefore, using a qualitative approach, this research will explore the implementation of the Practical Life Program to increase the independence of children aged 5-6 years in the BA Aisyiyah Jetis III unit. The Practical Life program approach focuses on physical development of fine and gross motor skills to provide learning experiences to increase independence. Some previous research by Aprilia, Adinda Risky, Rohita, in research on the implementation of children's independence with practical life activities was carried out at the Al Azhar 17 Bintaro Islamic Playgroup/TK in South Tangerang. Increased independence was proven by 22 children aged 3-4 years. 19 Skills demonstrated by children included the ability to pour water into a glass, serve cutlery, open and close doors correctly, and carry their own socks, shoes and bags (Aprilia & Rohita, 2021). Meanwhile, Eva Indriyani, in her research, practical life activities are part of the Montessori approach. Practical life activities can be used for the training process and habituation of children in carrying out daily life activities independently. Please allow children to eat and drink independently and maintain cleanliness. Bathing, washing hands, and many other activities (Hayati, 2022). Another thing was also put forward by D. Butar in his research in group B at Al-Muttaqin Islamic Kindergarten, Jambi City, namely through practical skills or often also called practical life skills, practical life or life skills from the Montessori approach. Life skills learning activities in this case focus on the most basic human activities such as self-care, the environment, community and sports (By et al., 2018). What differentiates the

previous research from this research is that it lies in the subject, the subject was carried out for 1 full week at 07.00-11.00 by carrying out habitual activities such as taking off and putting on shoes, eating and drinking, toilet training, putting on clothes, preparing clothes done independently. Another thing that differentiates it from previous research is the location. The location used in this research was PAUD, while previous research was carried out at Daycare, KB/TK. As time goes by, it is important for young children to have strong independence in facing life's challenges. Independence is a very important development. Life skills learning activities in this case focus on the most basic human activities such as self-care, the environment, community and sports (Pareira & Atal, 2019). Children's lack of independence becomes a problem as they progress through the higher education process.

Therefore, it is important to educate children about independence so that they do not depend on others and grow up with strong hearts and great personalities (Sa'ida, 2016). This research aims to determine the implementation of the Practical Life Program as one way of increasing the independence of children aged 5-6 years at BA Aisyiyah Jetis III. With planning, implementation and evaluation stages. Hopefully the results of this research can also provide a more detailed understanding of the influence on the implementation and benefits of the Practical Life program as developing the independence of pre-school children and provide recommendations for related parties in developing learning strategies at the PAUD level. Based on the background above, initial observation results show that 60% of children have underdeveloped independence and the majority of children tend to rely on the help of adults to carry out eating, drinking, putting on and taking off shoes, wearing toilet training clothes and other independent activities. So the aim of this research is to determine the implementation of the Practical Life Program carried out at BA Aisyiyah Jetis III to increase the independence of children aged 5-6 years.

## Method

This research uses qualitative research methods. Qualitative research methods allow for descriptive explanations of the data. The data collection techniques used were observation, interviews and documentation. Data comes from observations through prepared question instruments and by taking notes directly during field activities. In the interview, the school principal and homeroom teacher asked questions using structured questions based on an interview instrument sheet developed by researchers to reveal discussions regarding the independence of children aged 5 - 6 years. With the practical life program, data is collected through studying document data regarding various independent activities, this is also confirmed in Kaharudin's research, (Kaharudin, 2021). In qualitative research, checking the validity of data is a step that is closely related to qualitative research knowledge, because it is a tool for measuring the truth of research data (Sa'adah et al). The data validity technique is carried out by triangulating (combining) sources from different informants. Verify the validity of the information by checking the source to ensure the reliability of the information is appropriate in the field (M. Journal, P. Anak, U. Dini, Y. A. Salehah, and A. Wahyuni, 2023). The data analysis used in this research uses an interactive data analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman, namely data reduction, data display and data verification (Aini & Wahyuni, 2023). Verification or drawing conclusions is obtained from the results of observations in the field, interview notes, and documentation. The data analysis technique used by researchers is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Data analysis flow

By using the data analysis flow from Miles and Huberman, this research is expected to increase a more detailed understanding of the implementation of the practical life program to increase the independence of children aged 5-6 years at BA Aisyiyah Jetis III.

## Result and Discussion

Based on the results of interviews regarding the implementation of the practical life program to increase the independence of children aged 5-6 years, and also the results of data reduction, data presentation, and data verification

regarding the implementation of the practical life program to increase the independence of children aged 5-6 years at BA Aisyiyah Jetis III were obtained. The data results consist of three stages, namely planning, implementation, evaluation. Based on the results of research in the field, the following description was found:

The stages of planning a practical life program to increase the independence of children aged 5-6 years began when BA Aisyiyah Jetis III was first established and implemented a practical life program. Based on the results of interviews, the implementation of the practical life program was carried out in accordance with the SOP set by the Institute. In line with the opinion of Soemohadiwidjojo 2004, standard operational procedures are guidelines that aim to ensure that all operational activities run consistently, effectively and efficiently (Setiawan & Rahmawati, 2022). The SOPs which stimulate independence include welcoming SOPs, eating SOPs, core activity SOPs, bathing SOPs.

Based on the results of interviews between researchers and school principals, it was found that the scale of teacher assistance according to age or according to the child's abilities, this scale includes: helping completely, helping and giving opportunities to try, helping as needed and motivating, motivating children to be able to do it independently. Class teachers often receive calls from mothers to make children closer and more comfortable. Apart from that, teachers in independence activities through the practical life program act as facilitators or guides in carrying out independent learning planning activities so that stimulating independence is carried out by the respective class teachers. In the stimulation process, the practical life program teaches about independence, such as tidying up play equipment that has been used, putting bags in their place, taking food according to their needs, eating alone, washing their own cutlery, wearing their own shoes, defecating and cleaning themselves, by doing so. every day using strategies according to each class teacher, the things taught also become a target in planning the implementation of the practical life program at BA Aisyiyah Jetis III so that it is successful in achieving the goal of independence. This is in accordance with Gentry's theory in Wahyudin's journal which states that learning planning is the process of formulating and establishing goals, strategies, techniques and learning media in such a way as to achieve learning objectives (Kusumo & Afandi, 2020). Also in accordance with the Montessori education theory developed by Dr. Maria Montessori namely principles, goals and implementation of Practical life. What was carried out by BA Aisyiyah Jetis III Sukoharjo:

### ***Learn through experience***

Children learn best when they are directly involved in activities, not just through verbal teaching. Implementing independence in children through the practical life program at BA Aisyiyah Jetis III using the demonstration method. According to Hussain 2020, the demonstration method is the process of explaining learning content using facial expressions, gestures and body movements (Azizah & Abd Jabar, 2023). The school principal and teachers revealed that the demonstration method was deemed effective in implementing the practical life program to increase the independence of children aged 5-6 years at BA Aisyiyah Jetis III. So, in implementing the practical life program using the demonstration method, the teacher demonstrates the independent movements being carried out, so that the children imitate these movements so that the children can successfully carry out practical life activities independently. The activities provided are listed in the daily activity plan. This daily activity plan is a schedule designed so that the activities carried out are organized or structured. This activity is carried out every day from Monday to Saturday.

### ***The importance of an organized environment***

An organized and interesting environment allows children to explore and learn in an independent way, namely by making practical life program planning at BA Aisyiyah Jetis III carried out in three steps including: first, preparing a daily activity plan, secondly implementing a daily activity plan from Monday - Saturday, in the implementation plan to use media at BA Aisyiyah Jetis III using story books, and also various other concrete media for the process of stimulating children's independence. the third evaluates the results of implementing daily activity plans, in A. Pak Aziz's research also explains that evaluation is a personal evaluation stage based on measuring progress in completing activities (Aziz, 2018). Therefore, in the implementation plan, the assessment or evaluation is carried out based on the child's success. When the child is successful, the teacher can categorize the child as independent. If he still needs help, the teacher will assess that the child still needs assistance. in submitting the activity evaluation plan for the practical life program listed in the daily activity plan carried out on Saturday.

### ***Child readiness***

Activities are designed according to the child's development stage, so that the child feels ready and motivated to learn. Implementation of the Practical Life Program at BA Aisyiyah Jetis III is carried out as long as the children are at school from when they arrive until they go home. With daily habits including arrival. On arrival, the child is greeted by the welcoming picket teacher when the reception is carried out in accordance with the SOP. The SOP for welcoming includes the teacher being ready and standing to greet the child until they reach the front of the school fence. When welcoming the child, they must use a smiling and friendly face, such as saying hello, asking if they have had breakfast, then when parents provide information regarding their child, the teacher must record or remember the information. which is conveyed by the

parents, then the picket teacher conveys it to the child's homeroom teacher, then the picket teacher invites the children to take off and arrange their shoes on the rack that has been provided by doing it independently. children are taught to recite short letters and also recite tilawati according to the child's Koran stage, not only that, children are also taught to read through children's reading books, when carrying out Koran activities children are taught to queue for their turn to recite the Koran because it instills in children to appreciate the arrival of friends who early and instill a sense of patience in children so that they get used to doing it when they are outside of school. The next implementation activity will be at 08.00-08.30 implementation of physical play activities, these physical play activities are listed in the teaching module, these physical play activities are also one of the activities in the practical life program implemented at BA Aisyiyah Jetis III. After carrying out physical play activities, children are directed to the next activity, namely drinking and eating cake. In this cake eating activity, children are taught to look for and take their own cake so that children get used to being independent. In this cake eating activity, children are taught to eat and drink while sitting. use the right hand and also eat independently, so that when at home children can do it themselves without asking parents or other people for help. The implementation of practical life activities is then carried out during learning activities. This learning activity includes several practical life activities to increase children's independence, such as: practicing wearing their own clothes, folding clothes, cleaning up toys. This learning activity is held at 09.00 - 10.00. at 10.00 – 10.15 do book time activities or usually do free play activities, the next activity is lunch, toilet training. At lunch the child eats food that has been brought from home. When eating the child is not helped by feeding but the child eats alone to train hand strength and also train their independence so they get used to doing it themselves, during toilet training activities the child is directed to go to the bathroom, the child takes off his pants independently and after that goes into the bathroom to urinate, the teacher is in charge of directing and the child does it when wearing pants and the child has difficulty turning his pants inside out. The teacher himself gives an example The child becomes the teacher's example and the child imitates so that the child understands how to turn the pants inside out. The next activity is preparation for going home and waiting to be picked up by parents. By implementing practical life activities to increase the independence of children aged 5-6 years through daily habituation activities, it can foster a sense of responsibility and independence in children, this is supported by the opinion of Vionnita & Suyadi 2020. By using the right habituation method, children can learn to take the initiative , be responsible, and complete daily tasks without relying on adult help (Halimatussa'diah & Napitupulu, 2023).

### ***Teacher's role as facilitator***

Teachers act as facilitators who provide support and guidance without intervening in the child's learning process. In the process of implementing the practical life program at BA Aisyiyah Jetis III, teachers often monitor children's development either directly or by asking parents. During the process of implementing the practical life program, teachers often find that more than two children are carrying out practical life activities at the same time, but this does not affect the teacher in stimulating these activities. When this happens, the teacher can carry out supervision on the spot, because often if the number If there are more than two children, the child will tend to chat and joke a lot, such as during self-development activities, the teacher will pay attention to the child taking off his pants, taking off his diaper and throwing it in the trash (if he has not yet implemented toilet training), and cleaning himself after urinating. Then pay attention to the child turning his clothes/pants inside out until he puts them on. If the child is still unable to put on his own trousers then the teacher here acts as a facilitator to provide direction. In implementing the practical life program, teachers involve parents in assessing children's success, because it is considered very important to involve parents because most of the time children spend at home.

The evaluation stages are carried out during the practical life program implementation process. Evaluation can be carried out in a structured and systematic manner involving collaboration between teachers and parents to achieve results and targets, namely that children can carry out daily activities independently. The assessment in this practical life program is basically like the usual learning assessment, namely through teacher observations using checklist instruments, anecdotal notes, teacher reflections, teacher diaries or photo/video documentation. This assessment is also obtained from discussions of child development reports between teachers. Information from parents is also used as assessment material. In his research, Wildan shows that the assessments carried out by teachers are comprehensive and aim to obtain information about all aspects of student development, including cognitive, emotional and psychomotor ( Wildan, 2017). The results of the assessment of practical life program activities will be included in the child's development report/report card which will be submitted to parents, with information in the form of a description of the series of assessment processes carried out by the teacher. At the end of the implementation of the practical life program the teacher will carry out a final assessment, which is meant by this final assessment in the form of development results/report cards which are submitted to parents once every six months.

The implementation of the practical life program to increase the independence of children aged 5-6 years at BA Aisyiyah Jetis III has several supporting factors for children's success in carrying out independent activities, namely with a positive mindset, teachers will be confident that children will be able to do it themselves so they are patient with the child's developing process. , and teachers will motivate children more in various ways. Another supporting factor for success is that teachers always provide examples through demonstrations so that children will find it easy to carry out independent activities. Collaboration with parents is also a supporting factor in the success of children's independence,

such as during toilet training, parents at home carry out toilet training activities and toilet training will continue at school, this will speed up the completion of children's toilet training. Apart from the supporting factors for the success of the practical life program, there are also inhibiting factors such as the presence of ABK children (children with special needs). In the last year, there were several ABK children with various types of assessments that had not been detected initially, and the lack of special accompanying teachers which could hinder the implementation process of the practical program. Another inhibiting factor is that parents do not continue the program at home. This is in line with V. Alapján's opinion in his research. The family is the main supporting factor in children's growth and development. Because children meet their families every day and see firsthand the habits that their families emulate every day [Alapján, 2016].

Based on the results of observations and interviews, practical life has important benefits for children's independence. Because through daily activities that include purposeful life skills, it is important to apply them to early childhood in a directed and regular manner so as to create independent children. Implementation of the practical life program to increase the independence of children aged 5-6 years at BA Aisyiyah Jetis III Sukoharjo, there was a very good increase in independence. Of the 11 children in one class, 10 children have shown increased independence, but there is still 1 child who is not yet independent.

## Conclusion

Independence in early childhood is very important to be introduced and taught, in order to provide provisions for the child's future life, where children must learn to live without depending on other people to fulfill their needs so that children are able to make decisions about the problems they face, and develop children's interests optimally. based on the child's potential and talents.

Based on the research conducted, it can be concluded that the implementation of the practical life program has an influence on the independence of children aged 5-6 years at BA Aisyiyah Jetis III Sukoharjo. such as children being able to take off/put on their own shoes, eat on their own and get enough food by queuing, going to the toilet on their own, etc. Activities that are carried out repeatedly at school will become a habit for children, making children do something useful and have the courage to try new things. So that it makes children not always dependent on other people, and can also help students develop motor skills, concentration, discipline, independence, students gain experience after carrying out activities that they have done themselves, and students will find a new identity.

One way to instill independence in children is through a practical life program. Practical life activities that emphasize learning through daily activities that are used as teaching materials for children. This practical life activity is learning that provides real experience to students and prepares them to face the next life. The importance of practical life programs being implemented in schools as a bias activity can attract students' attention to increase students' interest in learning. Apart from that, practical life learning activities are carried out in schools so that the learning process is more interesting, varied and meaningful, thereby providing experience for students. One of the institutions that implements this practical life program is BA Aisyiyah Jetis III Sukoharjo.

supporting factors for children's success in carrying out independent activities, namely a positive teacher mindset, motivation for children and children who are intelligent in imitating, collaboration with parents. Inhibiting factors include the presence of children with special needs (children with special needs), some parents who do not continue the practical life program at home. However, from the problems above there is definitely a way out as a solution by providing habituation through the practical life program. This program will also collaborate with parents to achieve a common goal, namely increasing independence in children.

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