



# The Role of Fathers in Early Childhood Care Programs During the Covid-19 Pandemic from the Paternal Involvement Dimension

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## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received December 28, 2022

Revised January 05, 2023

Accepted March 23, 2023

Available online April 25, 2023

### Kata Kunci:

Peran Ayah, pengasuhan anak usia dini, covid-19

### Keywords:

The role of fathers, early childhood care, covid-19



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## ABSTRAK

Peran ayah dalam mengasuh anak menjadi salah satu faktor penting yang mendukung keberhasilan proses belajar anak di masa pandemi. Hanya saja kenyataan dilapangan menunjukkan bahwa ayah hanya memiliki sedikit waktu untuk memenuhi perannya dalam mengasuh anak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui peran ayah dalam mengasuh anak dari dimensi paternal involvement selama covid-19. Penelitian ini tergolong kedalam jenis penelitian deskriptif kuantitatif pendekatan survei. Subek yang terlibat dalam penelitian ini yakni 256 orang ayah yang mempunyai anak usia dini. Pengumpulan data dalam penelitian dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode angket yang bersifat tertutup. Data yang diperoleh dalam penelitian kemudian dianalisis secara statistik deskriptif. Hasil analisis penelitian menunjukkan bahwa peran ayah dalam pengasuhan anak selama pandemi covid-19 dari dimensi paternal involvement yaitu dibuktikan dengan ayah sebagai teman bermain, ayah memberi kasih sayang, ayah mempunyai waktu dan interaksi bersama serta komunikasi, ayah memberi contoh bermain, ayah mengawasi anak bermain bersama teman, ayah mengambil keputusan kegiatan, ayah merencanakan pergi bersama, ayah mengajak beribadah bersama. Berdasarkan hasil tersebut maka dapat disimpulkan bahwa peran ayah dalam program pengasuhan anak selama covid-19 pada kategori selalu dan sering.

## ABSTRACT

The role of fathers in raising children is an important factor that supports the success of the child's learning process during a pandemic. The reality shows that fathers only have a little time to fulfil their role in raising children. This study aims to determine the role of fathers in raising children from the dimension of paternal involvement during Covid-19. This research belongs to the descriptive quantitative research with a survey approach. The subjects involved in this study were 256 fathers who had early childhood. Data collection in this study was carried out using a closed questionnaire method. The data obtained in the study were then analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results of the research analysis show that the role of fathers in childcare during the Covid-19 pandemic from the dimension of paternal involvement is evidenced by fathers as playmates, fathers giving affection, fathers having time and interaction together and communication, fathers giving examples of play, fathers watching children play with friends, dad makes decisions on activities, dad plans to go together, dad invites worship together. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the role of fathers in childcare programs during Covid-19 is in the always and often category.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a child born up to age six who must receive growth and development stimuli according to their age stages (Partami & Sujana, 2021; Supriatna et al., 2022). Giving a stimulus to the growth and development of children can be done through early childhood education programs education. Early childhood education programs education is the level of education given to children before the child enters elementary education (Hakim, 2020; Wirasmita & Putra, 2018). In its implementation, Early Childhood Education education is carried out as a form of coaching for children from birth to the age of six.

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Early Childhood Education education is carried out through a process of providing stimulation to help the growth and development of children, both from a physical and spiritual aspect, so that children have readiness in entering further education (Gul, 2023; Maulana & Nurhafizah, 2019; Rocmah, 2012; Susanti & Henny, 2020). The educational level of Early Childhood Education is carried out to develop various aspects of child development, from the religious and moral aspects to cognitive, physical-motor, language, social-emotional and artistic (Budyawati, 2020; Hasanah & Laily, 2020). In Indonesia, early childhood education is generally carried out through a direct learning process through learning activities while playing. It's just that with the Covid-19 pandemic, learning in early childhood cannot run as it should.

During the period of the spread of Covid-19, learning in early childhood was carried out through an online learning process, wherein the online learning process, children needed special attention from parents (Monica & Yaswinda, 2021; Tsalisah & Syamsudin, 2022). Children's Maximum growth and development require parents' active role in raising children to develop character from an early age (Erzad, 2018; Sumiyati, 2018). During the Covid-19 pandemic, parents were required to accompany their children to play and study at home. The role of parents in accompanying children to play and study at home will impact the child's learning process (Iftitah & Anawaty, 2020). The reality shows that fathers' role in parenting children is still relatively low in the online learning process. The low role of the father has an impact on the psychological condition of the child, where the child will be insecure and difficult to adapt, psychological maturity slows down, and even children tend to run away from problems and get emotional when facing problems (Munjiat, 2017; Saragih, 2022). The weak role of the father is reflected in the 2015 national survey on the Quality of Indonesian Child Care conducted by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI). The Indonesian Child Protection Commission regarding the role of fathers in childcare shows that only around 26.2% of participants (fathers) are involved in childcare (Lilawati, 2020; Taukhid & Ishariani, 2021). As a result, the role of the mother is still very dominant in all indicators measured. The role of fathers is very important to be only slightly superior in technological issues related to the delivery and supervision of digital media.

In other research results related to the role of fathers in raising children at an early age conducted by UNICEF, it shows that there is still little awareness of fathers that he has an important role to be involved in children's lives (Andhika, 2021; Giantara et al., 2019). The role of fathers in this study still needs to be improved awareness of parenting. Based on the author's observations and interviews with several informants, the role of fathers in early childhood care in Ternate City still needs to improve. It is due to the traditional view that the father's role is the breadwinner. Meanwhile, mothers are more concerned with education and childcare. The low level of parenting is evidenced by the family's knowledge of parenting patterns and child growth and development, which is different regarding physical, mental/mental, and spiritual/religious development. The lowest average composite index value for child growth and development is 46.3 in North Maluku Province. This traditional view causes the father's low role in early childhood care. The role of working fathers needs more time to care for, educate and guide children. The father's low role will impact low self-esteem, feelings of anger, shame, and inability to experience the experience of being together with a father that other children feel.

The father's role in raising children is very important, such as accompanying, assisting, caring for, protecting, being an example or role model, guiding morals, and educating children (Astriani, 2019; Krisnawati & Rohita, 2021). In the past, parenting generally focused on mothers because mothers were more actively involved in raising children, while fathers did not necessarily take the same role. There is a traditional view that develops in society that parenting is not the duty and obligation of the father, the father only works to earn a living, and the mother's job is to care for and educate children (Rohmalina et al., 2019; Waroka, 2022). Therefore, fathers are less involved in childcare and only leave parenting to mothers. However, the current view has allowed fathers to participate in the child's upbringing and education. The better the level of knowledge about parenting, the better the father's role in accompanying learning at home (Taukhid & Ishariani, 2021). The role of the father, who was originally a breadwinner and alienated from the domestic area (household) with the existence of social conditions in Japan (shoushika), became important in establishing the role of the father in the family, especially in child-rearing (Brantasari, 2022; Montezuma & Lentari, 2020). The father's role is needed since the child is at an early age, especially in preschool. Currently, the father figure can play a role in various things, namely parenting and educational issues. Parenting, which used to go to the mother, now allows the father to participate and contribute to the upbringing and education process because it is a shared task (Intani, 2022; Lubis, 2022).

Several previous studies have revealed that the father's role is related to the father's presence, where the father plays a significant role in child-rearing activities, even though most fathers are working (Istiyati et al., 2020). The results of other studies reveal that father involvement in parenting is an active participation of fathers continuously in child care, which contains aspects of frequency, initiative, and personal empowerment in the physical, cognition, and affect dimensions in all areas of child development,

namely physical, emotional, social, religion, and morals. Therefore, the benefits of father involvement in early childhood development include religious, moral, cognitive, and social-emotional development (Wahyuni et al., 2021). The results of other studies reveal a positive relationship between father involvement in adaptation care for children aged 4-6 years (Nurhani & Atika, 2020). Based on some of these research results, fathers have a huge role in the upbringing and formation of children's character. It's just that in previous research, there has been no study that specifically discusses the role of fathers in early childhood care programs during the Covid-19 pandemic from the paternal involvement dimension. So this research is focused on this study to know the role of fathers in raising children from the dimension of paternal involvement during Covid-19.

## 2. METHOD

This research belongs to the type of survey research in which the main data and information sources are obtained from respondents as a research sample. Survey research is carried out to provide a description or description systematically related to the phenomenon being investigated. The brief research procedure is to identify the problem and formulate research objectives, determine the theory and research design, and then take samples using regional sampling techniques. Making research questionnaires and then distributing research questionnaires. After getting the data from the questionnaire, then conducted interviews with several respondents to strengthen the data from the questionnaire, analyze research data and draw conclusions. The population of this research is fathers in Ternate City. The sampling technique, namely the regional sampling technique, is used to determine the sample when the object under study or the data source is very broad. The samples in this study were North Ternate, Central Ternate, and South Ternate, by obtaining 256 respondents from fathers who had early childhood. Data collection in the study was carried out using observation, interview, and questionnaire methods, with the research instrument being a father's role questionnaire in the parenting program. In this study, questionnaires were distributed to several Early Childhood Education schools in North Ternate, Central Ternate, and South Ternate regarding the role of fathers in the parenting program seen from 3 main dimensions. The research instrument grid is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Father's Role Instruments in the Parenting Program**

Dimension	Indicator	Question Number	Total
Paternal Engagement / Interaction Paternal Accessibility	Time	1, 3, 7	3
	Interaction	2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 13	6
	Attention	5, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15	6
Paternal Engagement / Interaction Paternal Accessibility	Time	3, 4	2
	Interaction	1, 5	2
	Attention	2, 6, 7	3
Paternal Engagement / Interaction	Planning	1, 2	2
	Decision-making	5, 6, 7	3
	Arrangement	3, 4	2

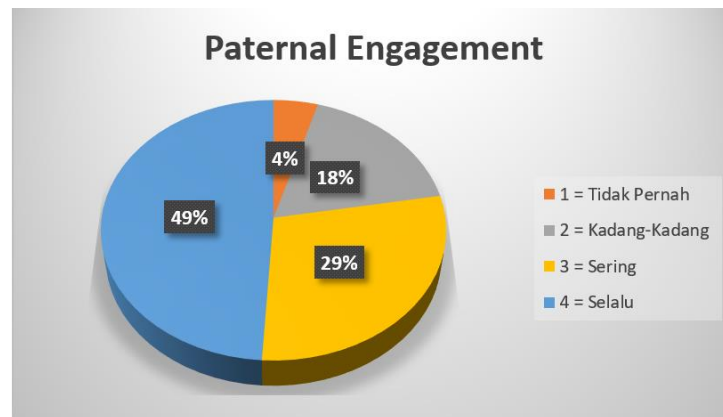
The data obtained in this study were then analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis techniques, which were carried out by arranging, sorting, grouping, coding, and categorizing data. The activities of grouping, making a sequence, and condensing data are so that the data is easy to read.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

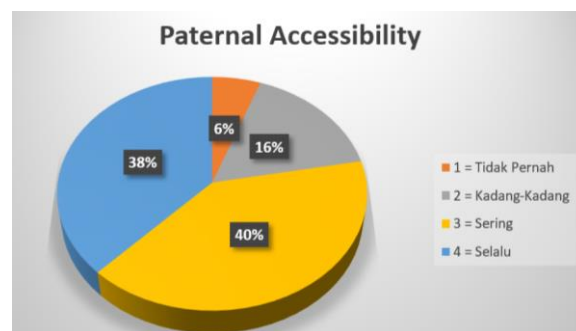
The role of fathers in early childhood care is divided into two concepts or models in paternal involvement: responsible fathering and generative fathering. The concept of father responsible includes three main dimensions of paternal involvement: Paternal Engagement / Direct Engagement (Interaction), Paternal accessibility (physical and psychological presence and availability), and Paternal Responsibility. The results of data analysis based on the three main dimensions of paternal involvement are as follows: first, the role of fathers in early childhood care programs that interact directly (Paternal Engagement/Interaction) during the co-19 pandemic in Ternate City shows that out of 256 respondents with ten statements, there were 4% who answered Never, 18% who answered Sometimes, 29% who answered Often and 49% who answered Always. These results show that fathers who provide direct care are 49% of the 256 respondents. It shows that fathers often take part in early childhood care, reinforced by interview data that fathers have carried out direct care by playing with children at home, fathers teach

children when they have new games, fathers invite them to talk with children and fathers—caressing the child by rubbing the child's head. The graphic description of the percentage of paternal engagement/father interaction can be seen in [Figure 1](#).



**Figure 1.** Graph of Paternal Engagement/Interaction Percentage

Second paternal accessibility is a lower form of involvement, where fathers interact with children only when needed. The total score of the results of data collection on the role of fathers in childcare programs that do not interact directly (Paternal Accessibility) during the Covid-19 pandemic in Ternate City shows that out of a total of 256 respondents with five statements, the result was that 6% of the responses answered Never, 16% answered Sometimes, 40% answered Often, and 38% answered Always. These results indicate that fathers do parenting but do not interact directly with children, with the highest score in the frequent category at a percentage of 40% of the total 256 respondents. Data from interviews reinforce this that fathers take care of but do not interact directly, as evidenced by fathers will give examples of how to play with new toys when children ask, fathers will help children when children only ask, fathers seeing children playing and fighting over toys that are a normal thing, father accompanies the child but while looking at the cellphone because there is work to be done. The graphical description of the percentage of Paternal Accessibility can be seen in [Figure 2](#).



**Figure 2.** Paternal Accessibility Percentage Graph

Third, the role of fathers in childcare programs who are not involved in parenting (Paternal Responsibility) during the Covid-19 pandemic in Ternate City, North Maluku, shows that of the 256 respondents with five statements, 7% of respondents answered Never, 24% gave Sometimes, 36% answered Often and 33% answered Always. These results indicate that fathers are involved in parenting in decision making, planning, and organizing children's activities with the highest score in the frequent category at a percentage of 36% of the total 256 respondents. It is reinforced by the results of interviews that fathers take part in making decisions to send their children to school. Fathers supervise children's play activities with their friends. Fathers plan to go out with their children, and fathers invite them to worship for evening prayers together with their children. The graphical description of the percentage of Paternal Responsibility can be seen in [Figure 3](#).

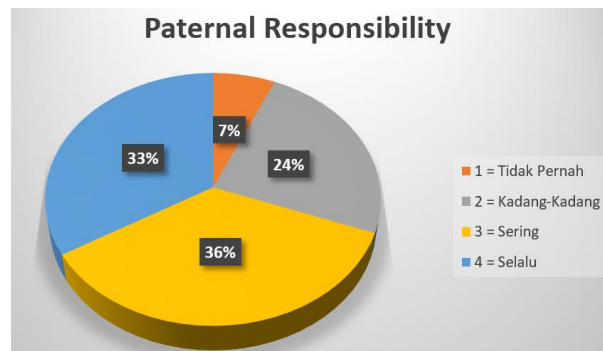


Figure 3. Percentage of Paternal Responsibility

## Discussion

Based on the research results above, this study has three main findings: first, in the paternal engagement/interaction dimension. These fathers provide direct care for 49% of the 256 respondents. It shows that fathers often participate in early childhood care, reinforced by interview data that fathers have provided direct care by playing with children at home. The social engagement aspect relates to fathers having free time with children to interact, and the didactic engagement aspect, namely talking to children (Nugrahani et al., 2021; Siregar et al., 2021). Paternal engagement is a form of direct parenting through interaction between children and fathers (Erzad, 2018; Sumiyati, 2018). Interaction, in this case, is the father has time to be together, relax or play. Parenting involves direct interaction between fathers and children, such as playing, teaching something, or other leisure activities (Iftitah & Anawaty, 2020). Forms of interaction include fathers eating with children, wearing clothes, talking, playing, and doing homework. In addition, in child growth and development, fathers must be involved in parenting both physically and psychologically, such as inviting children to play and being role models, being friends and playmates, and giving attention by stroking and stroking the child's head. (touch), invite children to talk regularly (communication) (Bussa et al., 2018; Kurniati et al., 2020).

Second, in the paternal accessibility dimension, the father takes care of but does not interact directly with the child, with the highest score in the category, often at 40% of the total 256 respondents. Interview data reinforce that fathers care for but do not interact directly. Fathers will give examples of how to play with new toys when children ask. Fathers will help children when children only ask. Fathers see children playing and fighting over normal toys. The paternal accessibility aspect (physical and psychological presence and availability) is an aspect that means that the father can be accessed easily by the child when the child needs his father with a lower form of involvement (Munjiat, 2017; Saragih, 2022). Parents are near the child but do not interact directly with the child. Accessibility or availability to interact with children when needed (Lilawati, 2020; Taukhid & Ishariani, 2021). It is more temporal. For example, fathers can easily find outside the house or in another room when their children play. The father's role in the paternal accessibility aspect is accompanying the child while looking at the cellphone because there is work to be completed, carrying out interesting activities and interests, and supervising friends (Andhika, 2021; Giantara et al., 2019).

Third, on the dimension of paternal responsibility, it shows that fathers are already involved in raising children in decision-making, planning, and managing children's activities, with the highest score in the frequent category at a percentage of 36% of the total 256 respondents. It is reinforced by the results of interviews that fathers take part in making decisions to send their children to school. Fathers supervise children's play activities with their friends. Fathers plan to go with their children. A father, as a decision-maker, becomes a family policymaker. A father must be firm and agile in making decisions to determine family policies so that they have clear directions and goals (Yunita, 2019). Father's care for early childhood requires fathers to meet all the child's needs, monitor, supervise children, help, accompany, and set a good example (Astriani, 2019; Krisnawati & Rohita, 2021). Based on the results of an interview with one of the respondents, the father invited him to worship for the evening prayer together with his child. It shows that the choice of religious activity has a significant relationship with the family environment, in this case, the father's role in inviting the child to worship (Muafiah & Fadly, 2019; Nugrahani et al., 2021).

The results obtained in this study are in line with the results of previous research, which revealed that the role of the father is related to the presence of the father, where the father plays a significant role in child-rearing activities, even though the majority of fathers are working (Istiyati et al., 2020). The results of other studies reveal that father involvement in parenting is an active participation of fathers continuously in child care, which contains aspects of frequency, initiative, and personal empowerment in the physical, cognition, and affect dimensions in all areas of child development, namely physical, emotional, social,

religion, and morals. Therefore the benefits of father involvement in early childhood development include the development of religion and morals, cognitive and social-emotional (Wahyuni et al., 2021). The results of other studies reveal a positive relationship between father involvement in adaptation care for children aged 4-6 years (Nurhani & Atika, 2020). Based on some of the results of these studies, it can be said that fathers have a huge role in the upbringing and formation of children's character.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The data analysis and discussion results show that fathers always provide direct care for their children in the paternal engagement dimension. Only the paternal accessibility and paternal responsibility dimensions show that fathers often do not interact directly and are not involved in the child's upbringing process. Based on these results, the father's role in the parenting program is fairly good because he has cared for it by making the most of his time caring for and guiding the child.

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