

# **Small Steps Towards Heaven: The Practice of Instilling Islamic Values Through Daily Activities at RA Alif Medan Helvetia**

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to describe the practice of instilling Islamic values in early childhood through daily activities at RA Alif Medan Helvetia. Islamic values are an important part of the formation of children's character, especially in early childhood which is known as the golden period of development. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that the cultivation of Islamic values is carried out in an integrated manner in children's daily routines, such as habituating Islamic speech, implementing simple worship, social activities, maintaining cleanliness, and through the example of teachers. This process takes place naturally and pleasantly, so that these values are easily absorbed and internalized by the child. The success of this practice is supported by the consistency of teachers, a positive learning atmosphere, and the active involvement of children in every activity. Thus, the practice of daily habituation at RA Alif proved to be a small but meaningful step in forming Islamic character from an early age.

**Keywords:** *Islamic Values, Early Childhood, Habituation, Islamic Education*

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## Introduction

Early childhood is a person who is in the foundation stage of character and personality formation. During this period, children's absorption of values, behaviors, and habits is very strong because their brains and souls are still in a very flexible stage of formation. What children see, hear, and experience will be recorded and form the basis of thinking and acting that they will carry into adulthood. Therefore, this period is known as the golden age that should not be wasted, especially in the aspect of instilling religious values that are the moral and spiritual foundation of children.

In the context of Islamic education, the inculcation of Islamic values from an early age is a shared responsibility between family, school, and social environment. The Prophet PBUH has emphasized the importance of children's education from childhood in his words, *"Every child is born in a state of fitrah, so it is his parents who make him a Jew, a Christian or a Magi"* (HR. Bukhari and Muslim). This emphasizes that religious education for children cannot be postponed or considered a responsibility when children are adults, but must be started from an early age, starting from simple and concrete things in daily life.

Raudhatul Athfal (RA) as an Islamic-based early childhood education institution has a vital role in laying the foundation of Islamic values to students. Islamic religious education at the RA level is not only in the form of knowledge transfer about the pillars of faith and the pillars of Islam, but rather the cultivation of Islamic habits in daily activities that can shape the spiritual character of children. The cultivation of values such as honesty, affection, patience, help, and love of worship must be carried out continuously, consistently, and in harmony with children's routines so that these values are not only understood, but also lived and practiced.

Daily activities in RA such as praying before and after doing activities, getting used to greetings, maintaining cleanliness, sharing food, and praying in congregation are important mediums to instill Islamic values. These seemingly small and simple activities are actually the first step towards the formation of true Muslim people who are aware of the teachings of Islam in all aspects of their lives. With a Pleasant and affectionate, these values are not instilled through doctrine or coercion, but through example and habituation.

RA Alif Medan Helvetia as one of the early childhood Islamic educational institutions in urban society has a commitment to shaping the character of children who are religious and have noble character. This school combines the national curriculum with an approach to Islamic values in all aspects of learning and daily activities. Various practices of instilling Islamic values are carried out through routine and incidental activities, such as daily prayer readings, Friday blessing activities, congregational prayer exercises, infaq collection, and Qur'anic love programs. This is done in the hope of forming Islamic habits that are inherent in children's daily behavior.

However, in its implementation, the cultivation of Islamic values through daily activities certainly faces various challenges. Not all children show the same response to the habituation that is carried out. Some are quick to absorb and imitate, but others need repeated approaches and guidance. Therefore, it takes strategy, consistency, and creativity of teachers in managing learning and parental involvement to strengthen the process of internalizing values at home.

Based on the description above, this study will examine how the practice of instilling Islamic values through daily activities at RA Alif Medan Helvetia, the extent to which these activities are effective in shaping children's religious character, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors in their implementation. This research is expected to contribute to the development of a value education model that is applicable, fun, and has a positive impact on early childhood spiritual development.

## Theoretical Studies

Islamic values are moral and ethical teachings that are sourced from the Qur'an and Hadith and are a guideline for life for Muslims. According to Zuhairini et al. (1995), Islamic values include faith, worship, and morals that reflect human relationships with Allah, fellow humans, and the environment.

In the context of early childhood education, Islamic values include aspects such as: Knowing and loving Allah and His Messenger, Getting used to thayyibah greetings (such as salam, bismillah, alhamdulillah), maintaining cleanliness and neatness as part of faith, doing good to others, learning discipline through prayer, queuing, and following the rules. These values are not only taught cognitively, but must be instilled through direct experience, habituation, and example.

Early childhood is a golden age in the formation of character and personality. At this age, children more easily absorb values through concrete experiences, repetition, and examples provided by the surrounding environment. According to Piaget (1952), early childhood is at the pre-operational stage, where their understanding is more symbolic and intuitive.

The application of values in early childhood is not enough through verbal instruction, but through example, routines, stories, and direct interactions. Therefore, the cultivation of Islamic values must be packaged in the form of daily activities that are fun and in accordance with the world of children.

Islamic Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is an educational institution that is tasked with instilling the foundations of Islamic faith and morals in children from an early age. The goal is not only to form children who are intellectually intelligent, but also to have noble character according to religious guidance.

According to Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, early childhood education aims to help children's growth and development physically and spiritually so that children have readiness to enter further education. In the context of Islamic PAUD, this includes spiritual readiness.

Islamic PAUD institutions such as RA (Raudhatul Athfal) play a strategic role in instilling Islamic values in a planned, systematic, and internalized manner through the curriculum, learning environment, and school culture.

Value instilling is not always done through formal learning, but it can be applied in a child's daily routine at school. According to Susanto (2011), instilling value through daily activities is more effective because: It flows naturally, It provides real experience to children, It can be repeated and strengthened every day.

Strategies for instilling Islamic values through daily activities include:

1. Habituation of Islamic speech and actions: greetings, praying before and after activities, kissing the hands of teachers and parents.
2. Simple worship activities: praying dhuha together, ablution, getting to know hijaiyah letters, and listening to the stories of the Prophet.
3. Social activities: sharing food, taking turns using toys, helping friends.
4. Cleanliness and neatness: dispose of garbage in place, wash hands, tidy up study tools.

These activities are carried out regularly and framed in a fun learning atmosphere, so that children do not feel burdened and can accept these values naturally.

Teachers have a very central role in the value learning process, especially at an early age. Children tend to imitate the behavior of the adults around them. Therefore, the example of teachers in saying, behaving, and behaving according to Islamic values is one of the most effective strategies in instilling values. As stated by Imam Al-Ghazali in *Ihya' Ulumuddin*, the best education is to set a good example. Children are not enough to be told what is right, but they need to be shown how to do it.

## Research Methods

The research used in this study is qualitative research that provides descriptive information in written or oral narratives about the people and behaviors observed. In this study, the author examines the phenomenon that occurred at RA Alif Medan Helvetia to obtain the truth of information based on the theoretical framework of the questions asked scientifically. The research approach used is a field-based descriptive approach in natural conditions taken from written or oral narratives and the behavior of the people observed consisting of school principals, teachers and students.

## Research Results and Suggestions

This research was carried out at RA Alif Medan Helvetia, an Islamic educational institution for early childhood that consistently instills Islamic values through daily activities. Based on the results of observations, interviews with teachers and principals, as well as documentation of activities, researchers found that Islamic values were instilled in an integrated manner in children's daily activities, not just during formal learning.

Some of the practices that are consistently carried out include:

1. Habituation of Islamic Speech and Actions. Every morning, children are invited to start the day with greetings, prayers in class, and reading short letters together. The teacher also guides children to get used to sayings such as "Bismillah" before eating, "Alhamdulillah" after finishing, and "Astaghfirullah" when making mistakes. This habit is done repeatedly every day.
2. Implementation of Simple Worship Activities. Children are trained to perform dhuha prayers together, ablution in the correct order, and practice prayer movements. The teacher introduced the story of the Prophet and his companions in the form of interesting stories adapted to the child's age. This activity fosters a sense of love for Allah and His Messenger from an early age.
3. Islamic Social Activities. Children are taught to share food, help friends who are struggling, and take turns playing. The teacher facilitates this activity by appreciating good behavior and explaining why it is a deed that is pleasing to Allah.
4. Habituation of Cleanliness as Part of Faith. Children are taught that keeping clean is part of faith. Teachers get children used to throwing garbage in its place, tidying up study tools, and washing hands before and after eating. All of these activities are accompanied by an explanation of the Islamic meaning of each of these acts.
5. Teacher's Example. One of the important points found is that teachers at RA Alif are direct role models for children. Teachers consistently show Islamic behavior, both in speech and attitude. Teachers not only teach but also become living examples of the values instilled.

The findings of the study show that the instillation of Islamic values in RA Alif is carried out contextually and integrated into children's daily routines. This strategy is particularly effective because early childhood tends to learn through repetition, hands-on experience, and imitation. This is in line with the theory of child development according to Piaget, which states that children in the pre-operational stage are easier to understand concepts through concrete experiences than abstract explanations.

Habituation approach in daily activities such as praying, praying, and behave politely, allowing Islamic values to be naturally inherent in children. This is strengthened by the example of teachers who become role models in children's daily lives at school. In this case, the role of teachers is not only as an educator, but also as a model of living Islamic values.

This practice also proves that value education at an early age does not have to be done theoretically, but can be delivered through simple meaningful activities. Habits such as greeting, queuing, sharing, and maintaining cleanliness are real forms of Islamic character

education.

From these results, it can be seen that the success of instilling Islamic values depends on the consistency of teachers in guiding and setting examples, as well as the school environment that supports the process. A fun, communicative, and affectionate approach is the key to success in forming noble morals from an early age.

## Conclusions and Suggestions

### Conclusion

Based on the results of research conducted at RA Alif Medan Helvetia, it can be concluded that the instillation of Islamic values in early childhood is carried out in an integrated manner through daily activities that are simple, fun, and in accordance with the world of children. Teachers consistently guide children in getting used to Islamic speech, carrying out basic worship such as prayer and prayer, maintaining cleanliness, and performing social behaviors that reflect Islamic values such as helping and sharing.

The habituation approach that is carried out repeatedly and affectionately makes these values not only cognitively understood, but also internalized in children's attitudes and behaviors. Teachers have a central role in this process, not only as teachers, but also as role models who set a real example in daily life. Example, positive reinforcement, and a pleasant learning atmosphere have proven to be the main factors in the success of instilling Islamic values.

Thus, it can be concluded that small steps taken consistently in the RA Alif environment are a very important initial foundation in shaping the Islamic character of children from an early age

### Suggestion

Based on the results and findings of this study, there are several suggestions that can be conveyed: First, for teachers and educators at RA Alif and similar institutions, it is recommended to continue to develop learning strategies based on habituation and example. Daily activities that have been running well need to be maintained consistent and evaluated periodically so that they are more effective in shaping children's character. Second, for educational institutions, it is important to create a school culture that supports the application of Islamic values, including providing children's worship facilities, contextual Islamic learning materials, and training for teachers in value and character education.

Third, for parents, there needs to be synergy between habituation carried out at school and at home. The values instilled in school will be stronger if they are strengthened in daily family life. Finally, for future researchers, it is recommended to expand the scope of research in different institutions or examine the long-term impact of instilling Islamic values on children's character development in more depth.

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