

The Role of Positive Parenting and Authoritative Parenting in Reducing the Risk of Violence Against Early Childhood at RA Ummi Barokah Asahan

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Abstract

Violence against early childhood is a multidimensional and urgent issue in the fields of developmental psychology, early childhood education, and family health. Global research consistently indicates that parenting quality is a primary determinant in preventing or exacerbating the risk of child maltreatment. This study aims to comprehensively examine the role of positive parenting and authoritative parenting in reducing the risk of violence against early childhood, integrating both approaches within a single analytical framework. The method employed is library research with a content analysis approach applied to 25 scientific sources comprising reputable national and international journals, as well as official documents from international institutions, published between 2006 and 2025. The results reveal three major findings: (1) positive parenting effectively reduces violence risk through mechanisms of secure attachment formation, parenting stress reduction, and enhancement of children's emotional regulation capacity; (2) authoritative parenting contributes through the application of rational, consistent, and democratic discipline that inherently rejects the use of violence; (3) the synergistic integration of both approaches produces a more comprehensive parenting framework that is proven more effective than applying each approach separately. The implications of this study affirm that evidence-based parenting education programs integrating both approaches need to be systematically developed in early childhood education institutions as a primary preventive measure against early childhood violence.

Keywords: *Positive Parenting, Authoritative Parenting, Early Childhood, Child Maltreatment, Violence Prevention*

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Introduction

Early childhood is in the most crucial developmental phase across the entire human lifespan. This period, referred to by developmental psychologists as the golden age, encompasses ages 0 to 8 years and is marked by rapid brain development, character formation, and the laying of cognitive, socio-emotional, and moral foundations (Pebriani & Darmiyanti, 2024). In a global context, UNESCO (2022) affirms that the quality of a child's experiences in the early years of life determines long-term developmental trajectories, including mental health, learning ability, and adult productivity. Yet it is precisely in this most decisive phase that children are most vulnerable to various forms of violence.

Global data indicate that violence against children is a widespread and seriously impactful problem. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) reports that approximately one billion children worldwide experience physical, emotional, or sexual violence every year. In Indonesia, the situation is equally alarming. Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Agency (LPAI, 2022) reveals that the home, which should be the safest space for children, is the most frequent site of violence, with biological parents as the most common perpetrators. Sartika et al. (2024) found in their study on parental verbal violence that most parents are unaware that their verbal actions constitute a form of violence with serious impacts on children's psychological development.

Violence against early childhood does not occur in a vacuum, but is a product of complex interactions among individual, family, and social factors. Gershoff and Grogan-Kaylor (2016), in their meta-analytic study involving 75 studies and more than 160,000 children, found that harsh parenting practices – particularly physical punishment – consistently correlate with increased aggressive behavior, diminished mental health, and deterioration in the parent-child relationship quality. Many parents still employ authoritarian or permissive parenting styles characterized by threats, physical punishment, shouting, and excessive control without regard for the child's emotional condition (Qotrunnada & Darmiyanti, 2024). Economic pressure, parental exhaustion, patriarchal culture, and low parenting literacy are contributing factors that exacerbate the situation (Sari, 2024).

In response to this reality, international scientific research has identified several evidence-based parenting approaches that are proven effective in creating safe and supportive caregiving environments. Two of the most prominent in developmental psychology literature are positive parenting and authoritative parenting. Positive parenting emphasizes warm relationships, open communication, and non-violent discipline as the foundation of healthy caregiving (Sanders, 2012). Meanwhile, authoritative parenting, first conceptualized by Diana Baumrind in the 1960s, combines emotional warmth with clear and consistent behavioral structure, creating a balance between children's freedom and responsibility (Baumrind, 1991). This study aims to examine the conceptual foundations and integrative mechanisms of both approaches in preventing early childhood violence, particularly in the context of RA Ummi Barokah Asahan.

Literature Review

2.1. Positive Parenting: Concept, Theoretical Foundations, and Characteristics

Positive parenting, or positive parenting as an approach, was comprehensively conceptualized by Sanders (1999) through the Triple P-Positive Parenting Program, which has since become one of the most widely implemented evidence-based parenting programs in the world. Positive parenting is defined as a set of parenting principles and practices that emphasize the creation of warm, supportive relationships between parent and child, while simultaneously providing clear behavioral structure through discipline that is constructive rather than punitive (Rahmi, Fatimah, & Febrianti, 2025).

The theoretical basis of positive parenting is rooted in several complementary developmental psychology theories. First, Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory, expanded by Ainsworth et al. (1978), states that the quality of the attachment relationship between caregiver and child in early life forms the child's internal working model. Secure attachment, resulting from responsive and consistent caregiving, is foundational to self-confidence, emotional regulation, and social competence (Yusmi & Wahyuni, 2025). Second, Bandura's (1977) social learning theory emphasizes that children learn behavior through observation and imitation of models – especially parents. Third, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory places the family as the most important microsystem determining the quality of child development.

The effectiveness of positive parenting has been extensively documented. Thomas and Zimmer-Gembeck (2007) found that Triple P interventions consistently produce reductions in child behavior problems and improvements in parent-child relationship quality. Cao et al. (2025) provided neurobiological evidence that positive parenting moderates the negative impact of childhood maltreatment on brain network connectivity involved in emotional regulation and cognitive control, demonstrating that this approach is not only preventive but also rehabilitative.

2.2. Authoritative Parenting: Concept, Dimensions, and Advantages

Authoritative parenting is one of four parenting typologies conceptualized by Diana Baumrind in her innovative research during the 1960s and 1970s. Compared to the other three typologies – authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful – authoritative parenting consistently produces the most optimal child developmental outcomes across cognitive, social, emotional, and moral dimensions. The primary characteristic is the balance between two dimensions identified by Maccoby and Martin (1983) as the core of every parenting typology: responsiveness (warmth) and demandingness (control).

Authoritative parenting is understood through three core interacting components (Darling & Steinberg, 1993): (1) warmth and involvement – parents demonstrate genuine affection and active attention to children's needs; (2) structure and supervision – parents establish clear, consistent, and child-comprehensible behavioral expectations with adequate monitoring; and (3) autonomy granting – parents encourage independent thinking, explain the reasoning behind rules, and allow age-appropriate participation in decision-making. The theoretical basis also draws on Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which explains that authoritative parenting fulfills three basic psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

The superiority of authoritative parenting has been extensively confirmed. Steinberg et al. (1992) in a longitudinal study of more than 10,000 American adolescents found that authoritative parenting consistently correlates with higher academic achievement, lower problem behavior, and better psychological health. Pinquart (2016) in a comprehensive meta-analysis of 1,111 studies found that warmth and behavioral control – the two main pillars of authoritative parenting – have the strongest effect sizes in predicting various child developmental outcomes.

2.3. Risk Factors and Impacts of Violence Against Early Childhood

Violence against early childhood is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by interactions among individual, family, and social factors. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) explain in their bioecological model that parenting behavior – including violent acts – is shaped by the interaction between individual characteristics, family dynamics, community context, and broader social structures. At the individual level, high parenting stress, history of depression, childhood maltreatment experiences, and harsh discipline practices are the most consistently identified risk factors (Sidebotham, Heron, & ALSPAC Study Team, 2006).

At the family level, poverty, marital conflict, economic instability, and social isolation are strong predictors of child maltreatment. A UNICEF (2017) study across 56 countries found that children from extremely impoverished families have 3–6 times higher risk of experiencing various forms of violence. The impacts of early childhood violence are multi-systemic and can persist throughout life. At the neurological level, exposure to violence can cause structural and functional changes in the developing brain, particularly in the amygdala, prefrontal cortex, and hippocampus (Pratiwi, Nursalim, & Sujarwanto, 2022). Anda et al. (2006) in the landmark Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study found a dose-response relationship between childhood adversity and various long-term negative outcomes, from mental health disorders and behavioral problems to chronic physical illness.

Research Methodology

This study uses a library research design with a qualitative-analytic approach. According to Syaodih Sukmadinata (2019), library research is a research method in which data collection is conducted through tracing, identifying, and analyzing relevant literature sources related to the problem under study. This approach was chosen with strong epistemological considerations: the study of positive parenting and authoritative parenting in preventing early childhood violence has a rich and diverse literature base – both theoretical and empirical – allowing for comprehensive analysis without primary data collection in the field.

The data sources comprise two types: primary and secondary. Primary sources consist of empirical research articles published in reputable national and international scientific journals, including publications indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, or PsycINFO, such as *Development and Psychopathology*, *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, and *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*. Secondary sources include developmental psychology textbooks, official documents from international organizations such as WHO and UNICEF, and reports from leading child protection institutions.

Literature selection was based on four primary criteria: (1) topic relevance to positive parenting, authoritative parenting, or early childhood violence; (2) source credibility (internationally indexed or nationally accredited journals); (3) currency (publications from 2015–2025, with seminal foundational works included regardless of date); and (4) full-text accessibility. Data were collected through systematic searches on Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, PubMed, ERIC, and national journal portals such as Garuda and Neliti, using Boolean operators in both Indonesian and English.

Data analysis used content analysis combined with narrative synthesis (Krippendorff, 2018), proceeding through four systematic stages: (1) data reduction – strict selection of literature resulting in 25 primary sources; (2) categorization – grouping findings into thematic categories; (3) interpretation, critical analysis to identify patterns, contradictions, and gaps; and (4) synthesis – integrating interpreted findings into a comprehensive narrative.

Results

4.1. The Role of Positive Parenting in Reducing Violence Risk

Based on the review of scientific literature, positive parenting has a significant role in reducing the risk of violence against early childhood through several interrelated protective mechanisms. First, this approach consistently builds secure attachment relationships between parents and children, which is the primary foundation of healthy socio-emotional development. Secure attachment reduces violence risk because emotionally responsive parents are better able to manage frustration and pressure without resorting to violence (Rahmi, Fatimah, & Febrianti, 2025).

Research by Cao et al. (2025) provides strong neurobiological evidence of the effectiveness of positive parenting as a protective factor. Their study found that positive parenting moderates the negative impact of childhood maltreatment on brain network connectivity, particularly in networks involved in emotional regulation and self-control – demonstrating that this approach is not only preventive but also rehabilitative. Second, positive parenting effectively reduces parental stress. Bangun et al. (2024) showed that positive parenting guidance programs significantly improve parents' ability to understand child developmental stages, manage negative emotions, and apply non-violent disciplinary strategies.

Third, positive parenting contributes to improving children's own emotional regulation capacity. Children raised with positive approaches tend to have better ability to identify, express, and manage their emotions constructively (Afiyah & Alucyana, 2021), creating more harmonious and less conflictual parent-child interaction dynamics.

4.2. The Role of Authoritative Parenting in Reducing Violence Risk

Literature review shows that authoritative parenting makes an equally important contribution to creating violence-free caregiving environments. Its primary characteristic – warmth combined with rational firmness and structure – is inherently incompatible with the use of violence as a disciplinary form. Authoritative parents apply clear rules with child-comprehensible explanations, so children's compliance is based on understanding rather than fear (Lestari, 2022). Steinberg et al. (1992) affirm that warmth combined with clear structure in authoritative parenting produces children with high social competence and resistance to negative influences, including aggressive and violent behavior.

Aritonang and Soetjiningsih (2024) found that authoritative parenting significantly correlates with better emotional regulation capacity. Widodo and Eka (2022) affirmed that consistency in rule application is a key element contributing to the reduction of child problem behavior, simultaneously reducing parents' need to use excessive pressure in enforcing discipline. Rudie et al. (2025) added that caregiving relationships built on mutual respect and open communication create an atmosphere that supports positive character development in children, including the rejection of violence as a problem-solving method.

4.3. Integration of Both Approaches as a Comprehensive Strategy

Positive parenting and authoritative parenting share aligned principles: both place children's developmental needs in balance with rational rule-setting, both reject violence as discipline, and both prioritize explanation, empathy, and dialogic communication. Conceptually, positive parenting provides the emotional foundation – warmth, acceptance, and responsiveness – while authoritative parenting provides the structural framework of clear, consistent, and reason-based rules. The combination of these two dimensions creates an optimal caregiving environment that, as Pinquart (2016) demonstrated, has synergistic effects stronger than applying each dimension separately.

From a violence prevention perspective, the integration of both approaches works through three primary mechanisms: (1) reduction of parenting stress – parents skilled in both approaches have a richer repertoire of responses, reducing the likelihood of impulsive reactions leading to violence; (2) strengthening children's self-regulation capacity – children raised with both approaches develop better emotional and behavioral management skills, indirectly reducing pressure on parents; and (3) formation of healthy relational models – interactions based on mutual respect and open communication create positive relationship models that children will reproduce in broader social interactions.

In the context of RA Ummi Barokah Asahan, this integrated approach can be implemented through structured parenting education programs, parent support groups, and

partnerships with psychology and family counseling professionals. This finding affirms that evidence-based parenting education programs integrating both approaches need to be systematically developed in early childhood education institutions as a primary preventive measure against early childhood violence.

Conclusion

Based on a systematic and critical review of the literature, four main conclusions can be drawn. First, positive parenting is proven to have a significant role in reducing the risk of violence against early childhood through mechanisms of building secure attachment, reducing parental stress, and improving children's emotional regulation capacity. Second, authoritative parenting contributes to creating a structured, democratic, and warm caregiving environment that effectively reduces the likelihood of violence. Through the application of rational, consistent, and reason-based rules, authoritative parenting builds children's self-regulation capacity while reducing parents' need to use coercion in enforcing discipline.

Third, the integration of positive parenting and authoritative parenting creates a more comprehensive and synergistic parenting framework than applying each approach separately. The combination of the emotional dimension from positive parenting with the structural dimension from authoritative parenting produces an optimal caregiving environment for early childhood development while serving as a strong protective factor against violence. Fourth, both parenting approaches can be implemented synergistically through structured parenting education programs in early childhood institutions such as RA Ummi Barokah Asahan, with the potential for sustained positive impact on families and communities.

Future research is recommended to conduct empirical studies with quantitative or mixed-methods designs to validate the findings of this literature review, and to explore moderating and mediating factors that influence the effectiveness of both approaches in the Indonesian cultural context, particularly in the Asahan, North Sumatra region. Policy makers in child protection and early childhood education are urged to develop policies supporting the implementation of evidence-based parenting patterns through adequate budget allocation for parenting education programs, capacity strengthening of early childhood educators, and development of community-based, responsive child protection systems.

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