



# Early Parenting Practices For Toddler Development: A Case Study in Kedokan Bunder District

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**Abstract:** Parenting styles from an early age play a crucial role in shaping a child's personality and supporting the growth and development of toddlers. Family communication is an interactive process that takes place within the family environment and serves as a means for the formation and development of values necessary as a foundation for life. This study focuses on communication within parenting styles, which plays a vital role in shaping a child's personality and supporting the development of toddlers. The objectives of this study are to understand the role of communication in parenting practices, identify various challenges faced, and describe parents' efforts in supporting toddler development. The research method employed is a descriptive qualitative approach using data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document analysis involving five parents and toddlers in Kedokan Bunder Subdistrict, with support from early childhood education (PAUD) teachers as informants. The research analysis utilized the Family Communication Patterns Theory by Koerner and Fitzpatrick. The results of this study indicate that communication initiated by parents from an early age plays a crucial role in supporting the growth and development of toddlers, particularly in the development of their communication, emotional, and social skills. This study emphasizes that a balance between open communication and the establishment of rules is a key factor in supporting the optimal growth and development of toddlers.

**Keywords:** Parenting Styles; Family Communication Styles; Toddler Growth and Development; Social-Emotional Development

## Introduction

The role of parents, through the parenting style they adopt, is a key factor in shaping a child's personality and development. Children are easily influenced by parenting styles and their environment from an early age. Effective communication between parents and children helps foster self-confidence, empathy, and social and emotional skills. A nurturing parenting style and positive communication should be maintained from an early age so that children can grow and develop to their full potential.

Natural growth and development is a journey that every person undergoes, passing through various stages of growth and development—from the moment an embryo forms until the end of life—involving both physical growth and developmental progress. The

process of growth and development consists of two distinct yet interrelated and inseparable aspects.

Family communication refers to the process of exchanging messages that takes place within the family environment as a means of interaction among its members. Through this process, the family serves as the primary setting for the formation and development of life values that guide individuals. A child's life within society is greatly influenced by their communication experiences within the family. If family communication patterns are not harmonious, this situation has the potential to impact a child's development. As the primary social group, the family plays a fundamental role in introducing individuals to social life and in shaping a child's ability to build relationships with their environment (Nurfalah and Dian Lestari. 2020).

Communication and parenting styles present very specific challenges, particularly in various aspects of toddler development, namely those related to language and cognitive abilities. Toddlers who are provided with sensitive and stimulating communication are more likely to demonstrate superior language skills in the future, which serve as the primary foundation for their cognitive and social abilities.

The final years of a child's first five years of life are a critical period for physical, intellectual, mental, and emotional development. During this period, the brain grows and develops at a rapid pace, particularly during the first three years of life; therefore, children's nutritional status should be monitored regularly until they reach the age of three (Puspita and Aryani 2023).

Young children require synergy between parenting practices within the family environment and the educational process in early childhood education as a key factor in the success of their developmental stimulation. Kindergarten (TK) is one form of early childhood education (PAUD) that focuses on providing the foundations for toddlers' growth and development, covering physical aspects (fine and gross motor coordination), intellect (thinking skills and creativity, emotional and spiritual intelligence), social and emotional development (attitudes, behavior, and religious values), as well as language and communication skills. All of these processes are aligned with the characteristics and developmental stages that toddlers go through.

Ideal parenting cannot be achieved without a well-established communication dynamic between parents and children. Interpersonal communication is considered effective when it involves two-way conversation, openness, a parent's willingness to listen, and the ability to convey messages clearly and with empathy. Through positive and consistent communication, children feel valued and understood, which significantly contributes to the development of a healthy and positive self-concept in children.

The field observations made by the author indicate that effective and positive communication between fathers, mothers, and children plays a central role in the development of spoken language in toddlers aged four to six years. Children who actively participate in conversations, receive positive feedback, and hear appropriate vocabulary from their parents tend to demonstrate significantly better language development.

Furthermore, parenting styles that are rejecting or authoritarian—characterized by one-way communication (consisting only of commands and punishments)—can foster defiant attitudes and mistrust among children.

Communication psychology recognizes that verbal and nonverbal interactions within the family have a formative influence. Effective communication patterns and parenting styles that attend to the needs of toddlers are concrete steps toward fostering a positive personality. Through this process, children learn about self-identity, social roles, and how to regulate their emotions. Family communication plays a role in shaping a child's self-concept and personality (Ni'mah 2018). In this context, communication among family members plays a role in shaping, maintaining, strengthening, and changing one's self-concept, indicating that a supportive communication environment is a prerequisite for healthy psychological development.

This study focuses on the communication processes that occur in the parenting relationship between parents and children, which play a crucial role in shaping children's personalities and supporting their development from an early age. Communication within the family environment serves as the primary foundation for the development of toddlers' language skills, emotional regulation, and social skills. Through daily interactions, parents not only transmit values and norms but also shape how children understand themselves, others, and their environment. This study utilizes the Family Communication Patterns Theory developed by Koerner and Fitzpatrick in 2002. The theory highlights two main dimensions in family communication: conversational orientation and conformity orientation. Conversational orientation indicates the extent to which families create a space for dialogic communication, encourage the exchange of ideas, and provide opportunities for children to express their feelings and thoughts. Conversely, conformity orientation relates to the family's emphasis on shared values, adherence to rules, and parental authority. Using a qualitative approach, this study examines how parents' conversation orientation and conformity orientation influence their interactions with children, as well as the implications for toddler development—particularly in terms of communication, emotional, and social development. This study was conducted in-depth among families living in Kedokan Bunder Subdistrict as the research context.

The urgency of this study stems from the fact that parenting styles play a crucial role in shaping both the personality and development of toddlers, as toddlers are highly influenced by parenting methods and their environment from an early age. The final period of the first five years of life is known as the golden period for toddlers' physical, intellectual, mental, and emotional development, during which the most rapid growth and brain development occur in the first three years. Family communication is an interactive process that takes place within the family environment, serving as a means of forming and developing the values needed as a guide for life; thus, if family communication patterns are not harmonious, this will inevitably impact the toddler's development. The quality of communication and parenting styles face very specific challenges, particularly regarding various aspects of a toddler's development—specifically those related to language and

cognitive abilities. This is because toddlers exposed to sensitive and stimulating communication are more likely to demonstrate superior language skills in the future, which serve as the primary foundation for their cognitive and social abilities.

Previous research has not addressed family issues or communication between parents and young children at all. The research gap identified by these studies is the lack of research that specifically examines the relationship between family communication—including conversational orientation and conformity—and factors in toddler development such as speech, emotions, and social skills. Based on the Family Communication Patterns Theory framework, this new study, titled “Early Parenting Styles for Toddler Development: A Case Study in Kedokan Bunder Subdistrict,” makes a significant contribution by integrating a communication psychology approach with family communication patterns theory to analyze family dynamics and communication interactions in greater depth. As an approach, this demonstrates how these factors influence early childhood development. Furthermore, this study provides a theoretical and practical foundation for improving more effective parenting and communication within contemporary Indonesian families.

The purpose of this study is to examine and analyze the role of communication in parenting in shaping a child’s personality and its role in optimizing the growth and development of toddlers. This study also aims to identify various obstacles parents face in implementing effective communication patterns, as well as the efforts made to overcome them in daily family life. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of family communication studies, as well as serve as a practical reference for parents, educators, and relevant institutions in designing a communicative parenting style that aligns with the developmental needs of toddlers.

## Methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at providing an in-depth and systematic description of early parenting styles, as well as various issues related to toddler growth and development. It draws on the primary theory, the Family Communication Patterns Analysis by Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002), which analyzes family interactions using two dimensions: conversation orientation and conformity orientation.

Data was collected from two main sources: primary data was collected through in-depth interviews and observations of 5 parent-child pairs and 5 toddlers as the specific subjects of observation, with early childhood education teachers in Kedokan Bunder Subdistrict serving as additional informants; data collection primarily took place in the informants’ homes to capture natural and authentic parenting patterns.

Meanwhile, secondary data consists of literature in the form of scientific articles, books on communication and parenting, and other sources that discuss family communication patterns as a foundation for developing qualitative thematic analysis. The collected data was then processed through open-coding and axial coding to identify practices of “Supportive Communication” and to interpret communication barriers that

hinder children's speech, emotional, and social development, with the credibility of the findings ensured through techniques that compare data obtained from multiple sources. The data analysis process was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach based on the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three main stages:

### **Data Reductions**

At this stage, the researcher conducted the processes of selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming the raw data obtained from observations and interviews with informants (parents, toddlers, and early childhood education/kindergarten teachers). The collected data is then analyzed through open coding and axial coding to identify key themes related to forms of "supportive communication," such as emotional validation, active listening patterns, the provision of verbal and nonverbal support, and how parents respond to their children's behavior.

### **Data Display**

The next step is to present the data in the form of a systematic descriptive narrative to facilitate the interpretation process. The reduced data is presented in the form of thematic analyses, excerpts from interview transcripts, and descriptions of communication behaviors observed in the field.

### **Drawing Conclusions and Verifications**

The final stage involves deriving the key insights and findings (central themes) from the data analysis. This process includes repeated verification to ensure consistency between the empirical data and the theoretical framework used, namely the Family Communication Patterns Theory (Koerner and Fitzpatrick 2006).

Triangulation was applied by comparing and verifying data obtained from several different sources. Interview data obtained from parents were compared with the results of direct observations of parent-toddler interactions in daily life, and supported by additional data obtained from early childhood education teachers. This triangulation of sources is used to ensure the consistency and validity of the data, strengthen the interpretation of findings, and avoid researcher bias regarding the parenting and parent-child communication patterns applied within families to support toddler development

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Family Communication Patterns**

Family Communication Patterns explain that the way families communicate shapes social reality, emotional relationships, and decision-making within the family. Based on research conducted by the researcher on parenting styles of parents of toddlers in Kedokan Bunder Subdistrict, it was found that communication plays a crucial role in the implementation of parenting styles by parents toward toddlers. The implementation of parenting styles within the family occurs through consistent interaction between parents

and toddlers in daily life. Parents provide space for children to express their feelings so they feel heard and valued, as they view open communication as part of their responsibility in supporting the growth and development of toddlers. Additionally, parental modeling in behavior, speech, and problem-solving is a key factor, as toddlers learn primarily through observation and direct experience within the family environment. This is evident when toddlers imitate their parents' behavior in daily life, such as saying "please," "thank you," and "I'm sorry" after seeing and hearing the examples set by their parents. Communication patterns must be further enhanced to foster a mutually supportive atmosphere. An adaptive communication approach tailored to the child's age demonstrates good adaptability. However, the complaints expressed by children underscore the need for a more assertive and empathetic communication approach—one that goes beyond mere instruction (Assegap et al. 2025).

Interactions between parents and toddlers occur regularly during various daily activities, such as when waking the child up, taking them to school, spending time with them at home, and at bedtime. Parents also involve toddlers in simple decision-making processes, such as choosing play activities, with the aim of helping children learn independence and feel valued. This finding is supported by statements from early childhood educators who noted that toddlers accustomed to interacting at home tend to be more confident and active in sharing stories at school because they feel comfortable and supported by their family environment.

### **Conversational Orientation**

Conversational orientation is reflected in the level of family interaction at the upper end of this dimension, where family members interact with one another freely, frequently, and spontaneously, without many restrictions on the time spent interacting with one another, and family members share activities planned by the family to engage in joint activities as a unit, which are discussed within the family setting, including in family decision-making (Carlson 2017). In this context, parents in Kedokan Bunder foster an environment of open daily communication—for instance, when waking their toddlers or selecting play activities that support the toddlers' emotional and social development. The parenting style evident in their daily interactions with the toddlers is clear. There is a high degree of openness that allows toddlers to freely express their feelings to their parents, in line with the parents' role in directly monitoring the toddlers' development.

"I always give my child the freedom to talk about anything with both parents" (Excerpt from an interview with Fina's mother, the toddler's parent, January 10, 2026).



**Figure 1.** Parents Chatting with a Toddler  
(Source: Researcher's Document, 2026)

The frequency of casual conversations—which can occur up to five times a day, starting when dropping the child off at school, in the afternoon, and right before bedtime—is a key focus due to the parents' constant presence at home. While the toddler is playing, parents can engage by observing, asking light-hearted questions such as “What are you playing with?” or “What color did you choose?”, and praising the toddler's efforts. When toddlers make mistakes—such as spilling a drink—parents can offer a calm explanation rather than immediately scolding them. Parents can point out that the action was careless, then invite the toddler to clean it up together. Through this approach, toddlers learn about responsibility without feeling afraid or pressured. Another example is when parents limit screen time. Instead of strictly forbidding it, parents explain the reasons for the limits and redirect the child's attention to other activities, such as playing outside or reading a book together. Such interactions demonstrate a balance between enforcing rules and warm communication, so the child understands the boundaries while still feeling cared for. These routines are not viewed merely as ordinary supervision, but also as a natural space for sharing family moments, which ultimately strengthens emotional bonds and fosters toddlers' social development.

Active involvement is evident when parents give toddlers the opportunity to make decisions about small matters, such as choosing a game, to foster independence and a sense of being valued in the child. Although facing challenges such as toddlers refusing to take a nap because they want to play, parents handle this situation through a gentle communication approach using gentle persuasion and simple advice, as well as redirecting their attention from gadgets to outdoor activities in a relaxed yet firm tone. The toddlers'

self-confidence increases, and this is reinforced by Informant 6, who observed that children with good communication at home are more confident in sharing stories at school.

### **Conformity Orientation**

A high conformity orientation is associated with beliefs about what is considered normal within a family and is often understood as a characteristic of traditional family structures. From this perspective, families are viewed as having strong emotional bonds among members and hierarchical relationships. Family members prioritize relationships within the family over relationships with outsiders and expect resources such as space and finances to be shared. Families with a high conformity orientation believe that individual schedules need to be coordinated among family members to maximize time spent together. Therefore, personal interests are expected to be set aside and aligned with the family's interests. In this pattern, parents serve as the primary decision-makers, while children are expected to act in accordance with family decisions and interests (Carlson 2017). As reflected in the views of parents in Kedokan Bunder Subdistrict, who emphasize the importance of communication regarding family rules through harmonious upbringing and prioritize good relationships among family members as the top priority.

“Provide toddlers with more education and always try to reinforce lessons through stories and small examples that we demonstrate first, so that toddlers can follow along without feeling pressured—which could actually hinder their growth and development, particularly their mental well-being” (Excerpt from an interview with Ibu Darwati, a parent of a toddler, January 10, 2026).

Based on interviews with parents in Kedokan Bunder Subdistrict, parents play a role in regulating their children's activities, behavior, and development, particularly in the area of education. This is evident in the expectation that children follow the rules established within the family. Some parents encourage their children to quickly master certain skills, such as reading or writing, even though the children are still in the early stages of development. This parenting style reflects the belief that the child's individual interests must be aligned with the family's overall interests. Parents position themselves as the primary decision-makers, while children are expected to align their attitudes and actions with their parents' guidance and wishes. Family communication tends to be one-sided and normative, with an emphasis on discipline, uniformity of values, and efforts to maintain family order and harmony—hallmarks of a traditional family structure with a high orientation toward conformity..



**Figure 2.** Parents Are Reminding Their Toddlers of the Rules and Instilling Them  
(Source: Researcher's Document, 2026)

Based on an interview with Informant 6, an early childhood education teacher, parenting styles influence family communication regarding children's behavior in the school environment. The teacher found that toddlers often recount experiences of being scolded by their parents for minor mistakes made at home. This situation can be understood as a form of parental control in shaping toddlers' behavior.

### **Challenges Faced by Parents**

Parents still face challenges in practicing good parenting. One common obstacle is children's reluctance to follow their parents' instructions, such as refusing to take a nap because they still want to play. In addition, time constraints also pose a challenge for parents, especially when they have to divide their attention between household chores, cooking, and spending time with their children.

From the perspective of early childhood education teachers, another challenge arises when parents are not fully patient while accompanying toddlers in learning activities—for example, by demanding that children learn to write quickly even though they are still in the letter-recognition stage. This situation indicates that parental expectations that are not aligned with the toddler's developmental capacity can hinder the communication process, which should be supportive. From the parents' perspective, the child is perceived as difficult to manage, while from the child's perspective, parents are seen as being overly involved in every activity they undertake.

"There is a difference: children who are rarely encouraged to communicate at school tend to become quiet and less enthusiastic because they aren't used to it, whereas those who frequently interact with their parents have greater self-confidence because they feel supported by their parents. If interactions at home are positive, the impact on their

surrounding environment is also positive.” (Excerpt from an interview with Ms. April, an early childhood education teacher, January 12, 2026).

This situation demonstrates that communication between parents and children is not yet functioning properly, and if left unaddressed, it has the potential to lead to failures in child-rearing and education (Putri, Makmuroh Sri Rahayu, and Andhita Nurul 2021).

### **Parental Efforts**

To address these challenges, parents employ various communication strategies that are persuasive or gently encouraging, tailoring their approach to the toddler’s needs. When a child disagrees with established rules, parents choose to speak to the child kindly, coax them, and offer simple guidance. Despite time constraints, parents strive to maintain a close bond by allowing the child to play near them so that interaction continues.

When parents set limits, impose restrictions, or establish rules regarding their children’s use of cell phones, tablets, or other digital devices, they use a relaxed yet firm tone, while encouraging the children to engage in outdoor play instead.

“I try to limit my child’s screen time by encouraging him to play instead; even when I do allow him to use electronic devices, it’s only for educational purposes” (Excerpt from an interview with Lilis, the parent of a toddler, January 10, 2026).

Communication within the family is considered essential for achieving specific goals, which are typically scheduled and prioritized. A quiet family life without proactive communication can damage the bond between parents and children, but effective communication helps every family member understand and support one another

### **Discussion**

Based on the research findings, family communication patterns in Kedokan Bunder Subdistrict indicate that communication plays a crucial role in shaping parental child-rearing practices toward toddlers. Routine interactions during daily activities—such as waking the child, taking them to school, playing with them, and putting them to bed—serve as the primary means for instilling values and shaping the child’s character. Parents’ open attitude, which gives children space to express their feelings and experiences, indicates a high level of conversational orientation within the family. Children do not merely act as recipients of messages but are actively involved in two-way communication, including in simple decisions such as choosing a game. This situation has a positive impact on children’s social and emotional development, as evidenced by increased self-confidence and courage in interacting at school.

The findings of this study align with the Family Communication Patterns Theory, which emphasizes two main dimensions: conversational orientation and conformity orientation. In practice, these two dimensions are interrelated and go hand in hand. On the one hand, parents create a fairly open space for dialogue; on the other hand, they firmly instill family rules and values. Conformity orientation is evident through the dominant role of parents as the primary decision-makers and the expectation that children adhere to family

rules. This pattern reflects a hierarchical and traditional family structure, with an emphasis on discipline, uniformity of values, and harmonious relationships among family members. Each orientation exhibits distinct patterns in the collective construction of social reality. They call this co-orientation, or “a situation in which two or more individuals focus their cognitive attention on the same object in their social or physical environment and form beliefs and attitudes toward that object.” Co-orientation does not imply that family members always agree with one another, but generally, families face the demand to achieve at least some form of mutual understanding. Conversation and conformity are two distinct ways of achieving co-orientation (Koerner and Fitzpatrick 2006).

The discussion indicates that parental modeling is a key element in successful family communication. Toddlers tend to imitate their parents’ behavior—such as saying “please,” “thank you,” and “sorry”—after observing these actions firsthand at home. This underscores that communication occurs not only through words but also through concrete actions and everyday attitudes. Thus, a shared understanding and values between parents and children are formed through a continuous process of interaction, even if not always in the form of absolute agreement.

This study also identified a number of barriers to the implementation of family communication patterns. Some parents still use a communication approach that tends to be one-sided and prescriptive, particularly regarding children’s education and skill development. Additionally, complaints from children indicate that overly directive communication needs to be balanced with empathy and firmness appropriate to the child’s developmental stage. Without a proper understanding of the developmental characteristics of toddlers, communication risks becoming ineffective and may negatively impact the child’s emotional well-being.

In general, this discussion underscores that a balance between conversation-oriented and rule-oriented approaches is a key factor in supporting the growth and development of toddlers. Open communication fosters a sense of security and respect in children, while the enforcement of rules provides direction and structure for their development. The combination of these two elements creates harmonious, purposeful family communication that optimally supports the development of children’s communication, emotional, and social skills.

This study highlights the need for parents to strike a balance between enforcing rules and fostering openness in their interactions with toddlers. This balance plays a crucial role in maintaining harmonious parent-child relationships while supporting toddlers’ overall development. The findings of this study also highlight the importance of collaboration between the family environment and early childhood education institutions to ensure a shared understanding of toddlers’ needs and developmental stages, thereby enabling a continuous process of stimulation.

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## Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion regarding Early Parenting Styles and Toddler Development: A Case Study in Kedokan Subdistrict, the findings indicate that the communication patterns employed by parents from an early age play a crucial role in supporting toddler development, particularly in the development of children's communication, emotional, and social skills. The family communication patterns used by parents in Kedokan Bunder Subdistrict demonstrate efforts to build warm relationships through openness, the habit of talking with children, and involving children in daily activities. This makes children feel valued, safe, and comfortable expressing their feelings and experiences, thereby fostering the development of their self-confidence and social skills. The research findings also confirm that parenting styles are shaped by the interplay between conversational orientation and conformity orientation in family communication. Parents not only play a role in instilling values, rules, and discipline, but also strive to adapt their communication style to the toddler's circumstances and needs. However, in practice, several challenges remain, such as parents' limited time, varying levels of patience, and children's development not always aligning with parental expectations. Without a solid understanding of the stages of toddler development, these factors can potentially make communication between parents and toddlers less effective. This study highlights the need for parents to strike a balance between enforcing rules and fostering openness in their interactions with toddlers. This balance plays a crucial role in maintaining harmonious parent-child relationships while supporting toddlers' overall development. The findings of this study also highlight the importance of collaboration between the family environment and early childhood education institutions to foster a shared understanding of toddlers' needs and developmental stages, thereby ensuring that the stimulation process can proceed continuously.

Based on the research results in the file, it is recommended that future research can examine in more depth the relationship between family communication patterns especially conversation orientation with various aspects of child development such as speaking ability, emotions, and social skills, considering the limited research that specifically discuss this relationship; in addition, further research also needs to pay attention to the suitability between parenting patterns, parental communication, and the child's developmental stage in order to avoid communication ineffectiveness that has the potential to hinder child development, as well as develop studies that integrate the roles of families and early childhood education institutions in creating more effective and sustainable communication patterns in supporting child growth and development.

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