

# The Importance of Emotional Intelligence Stimulation in Early Childhood Returning to Kindergarten After the Covid-19 Pandemic

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to see the importance of stimulation given to children in the new normal. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the teaching and learning process has started to return to normal along with the sloping of incoming cases. Many children are not emotionally ready to go to school because they are comfortable with the atmosphere of learning at home. Based on the analysis, the researchers found that the emotional readiness of children to start school is very important in supporting academic achievement, the better the children emotionally such as being brave, confident, independent, responsible and disciplined, will be easier providing stimulation to the initial concepts that must be mastered by children. For this reason, It is crucial to give appropriate stimulation for early childhood emotional intelligence for readiness to enter school after the COVID-19 pandemic

**Keywords:** Emotional stimulation, back to school after covid-19

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood has the potential to grow and develop into potential and productive individuals, for that it is necessary to optimize their growth and development during the golden age. This golden age period has been stated by many experts to be a very crucial period for an individual, because 50% of his brain development develops at the age of 0-5 years, this is a very large period of opportunity in optimizing child development by looking at the large proportion of children's development [1]–[4].

One of the important aspects that parents and teachers pay attention to stimulate children in early childhood is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to manage his feelings and express them through reasonable actions without harming others. Emotional intelligence is a component that affects a person's academic ability and achievement and success after he grows up. The meaning of emotional intelligence refers to a person's control in actualizing himself in his social community as part of society [7]–[9].

To develop emotional intelligence requires a certain practice and consistency. A child develops his emotional

intelligence as well as social intelligence, and character through habituation from early ages, starting from habits or routine activities of families, communities, and schools. [10]–[12]. The stimulation of emotional intelligence is of course a very good support system if the three components have responsibilities and carry out their respective roles according to the needs and portions required by the child. If the three components are not optimal, then the development of the child's ability or emotional intelligence is not optimal and will have a large negative influence on the child's life.

During the pandemic period since it broke out in early 2019, it is necessary for everyone to limit interaction with other people, limited activities outside the house and school activities must be done online. [13], [14]. This of course has an effect on the development of emotional abilities, especially in early childhood. In the development of children in this emotional aspect, they are trained with the intensity of interaction with other people, the more characters encountered by children in interacting will provide indirect stimulation to the child's emotional intelligence. For example, the child's courage in meeting other people, the child's independence will also be stimulated by the problems he encounters when interacting with his friends, the child understands the rules and

disciplines that exist in his social community, and many other things.

After almost two years everyone is living with restrictions, then schools are conducted online at the beginning of the 2021/2022. The school commenced to study face-to-face. For this reason, it is necessary to prepare children to start a new life with a new order when they return to school. Among the aspects that must be prepared is the child's emotional intelligence. This is a very important thing to be optimally stimulated so that children are able to adapt and accept new learning situations that are not only physically ready but also mentally ready. This study discusses and analyzes the importance of stimulating early childhood emotional intelligence when returning to school with a face-to-face system

## 2. METHODS

This article is qualitative research with a literature study approach. Data collection techniques are carried out through studies and studies from reference books, articles and journals, newspapers, and mass media both print and online (Ilmiah, Rahmayuni, and Hazizah, 2019). The results of data collection were carried out by in-depth analysis based on the results of the latest research and adapted to the studies discussed in this paper. The population in this study is early childhood in kindergarten age services

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Early Childhood Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to manage his behavior when expressing his feelings, thoughts, and moods correctly without harming himself and others. [4]–[8]. Emotional intelligence in early childhood is the child's ability to manage himself when interacting with others, convince himself and be able to control his attitude when he feels uncomfortable. This is the result of thinking about a particular condition, where there is a relationship between thinking activity and the result of the perception of the condition. Basically, this emotion is a picture of human feelings when he or she experiences various different situations and conditions. This is natural, because this emotion is a natural human reaction to various real conditions, so actually, there are no good emotions or bad emotions.

Emotional intelligence is very important to be developed and owned by a person. Emotional intelligence is one that shapes a person's character and personality, good or bad a person will be judged by his ability to control his attitude or behavior. [9], [10]. The better a person's behavior and behavior will prove that his emotional intelligence is getting better or showing his emotional maturity. Emotions are reactions to certain situations by the body [11], [12].

In the psychology book by Atkinson [13]–[15] conveying his analysis of emotional problems, there are 2 types of emotions, namely pleasant and unpleasant emotions. Martin also said that his good or bad emotions only depend on the

impact that will be caused both for himself and for others around him.

Hurlock [8], [16]–[18] argues that social emotional development is the development of behavior in accordance with social demands, where emotional development is a process in which children practice social stimulation, especially those obtained from group demands and learn to get along and behave. Meanwhile, according to Salovey and John Mayer as cited in (Bandura 2009; Nugraha et al. 2018) Emotional social development includes empathy, expressing and understanding feelings, allocating anger, independence, adaptability, favoring the ability to solve problems between individuals, perseverance, solidarity, courtesy and respect.

The fact is that emotions become a very important aspect, this is because the expression of emotions can relieve stress. The smarter a child is in expressing his feelings, the more comfortable he will feel. Children's skills in managing existing emotions result in children being able to be familiar and friendly with others, even able to communicate sincerely and openly with others. [20]–[22]. Many who have done research on research actually carry a simple message, namely that it is very important to carry pleasant emotions everywhere.

### 3.2. The Importance of Stimulating Emotional Intelligence in Early Childhood After a Pandemic

Early childhood with high emotional intelligence is a child who has the ability in elements of emotional intelligence, namely the ability to manage emotions, have a high attitude of empathy, have skills in social relationships, be self-motivated, independent, responsible, resistant to stress, optimistic, and problem-solving skills. This component in emotional intelligence supports life success at the next level and is very supportive of careers after they are adults. Once the importance of having emotional intelligence, intelligence must be taught to children as early as possible. As stated by Goleman, the importance of teaching emotional intelligence to children is in order to give them better opportunities in order to take advantage of their potential. [23]–[25].

Emotional intelligence in early childhood can be a means of self-control so that children are avoided from bad actions and attitudes, which can harm themselves or other people and other creatures around them. Emotional intelligence in early childhood is a tool that is used as a detection tool for parents in recognizing the talents and interests of early childhood. In addition, emotional intelligence can be used as the basic capital for children to develop their potential in the Playgroup or Kindergarten environment and in their community. Emotional intelligence helps early childhood in order to grow and cultivate the spirit of leadership in any field.

Facing the new normal and returning to school, it is very important for parents and teachers to pay attention to the stimulation of children's emotional intelligence. The description above has explained that the urgency in emotional intelligence in early childhood has a very important impact in determining one's success. What's more, after going through these times of the covid-19 pandemic, children are indirectly stimulated with extremely high anxiety, limited by various

rules and activities that should be given to children in developing all the competencies and skills they must have.

With good emotional ability or intelligence, it will provide opportunities for children to explore various things around them, try new things, have good social relationships with friends, be confident and believe in themselves, have a sense of responsibility and discipline with the rules and norms that exist around them, therefore the child will be easy to master and control himself or herself well.

### 3.3. Stimulation of Early Childhood Emotional Intelligence

There are many ways that can be used by parents and teachers in providing the right stimulation to develop emotional intelligence in early childhood. Accuracy in choosing the right method or method will greatly determine the results or development of children's emotional intelligence, and vice versa in choosing the wrong method of stimulation will also have a bad impact on children's emotional development. [25].

Among them can be done by giving children the opportunity to observe and pay attention to their surroundings, by paying attention and seeing the surrounding environment has a good effect on children where they learn to understand and detect those around them. [7],[35]–[37]. This is very good because children learn to analyze and understand situations and conditions, thereby making decisions to behave and behave in accordance with their situation and conditions.

Teachers should train children to interact with friends, socialize and communicate with others and this is a very effective step or way to stimulate children's emotional intelligence [23], [24], [30]. Children's activities when interacting, communicating, and socializing will be directly related to children's emotional abilities. There are some other ways to train children to understand various characters, to control themselves and respect others, and build empathy for others.

There are many forms of various activities that can be carried out with children at school with teachers and friends that have a positive effect or positive stimulation on their emotional development, such as group play, projects, competitions, and other outdoor activities. Creating activities that involve children physically and mentally in activities related to other people, in other words, that involve communication, socialization, and interactive activities with more individuals while still observing good health protocols.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of an analysis of various literature relevant to the variables that the researchers raised, it can be concluded that stimulation of emotional intelligence in early childhood when returning to school after the COVID-19 pandemic is very important. Stimulation of children with a variety of joint activities that involve more interaction, socialization, and communication with other people, especially their peers. Thus the child is easy to learn many

things without him realizing it, but gives a very extraordinary effect on his emotional intelligence.

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