



The Application of Mutual Cooperation on the Social Development of Children Aged 5-6 Years

Mulya Sari¹, Vivi Julisti¹, Zikra Dwi Putri¹, Mayang Belia Sameto¹

¹STIT Syekh Burhanuddin Pariaman, Indonesia

 muliyasari14@gmail.com*^{*}

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand the social aspects of children aged 5-6 years and to find out how the concept of mutual cooperation is implemented in children's social development. The method applied in this study is a qualitative method. This study aims to collect information on whether the values of mutual cooperation have been applied in children's social development. In this study, there are two main focuses examined, namely: i) Social development of children aged 5-6 years. ii) Implementation of mutual cooperation in the social development of children aged 5-6 years. The results of the study indicate that the social development of children aged 5-6 years is in accordance with the appropriate stage of social development, including compliance with rules, the ability to interact with friends, and understanding in expressing good and bad behavior. Children aged 5-6 years can be said to have achieved significant social development. It is hoped that this development will enable children to socialize with friends and the environment and be able to work together in class groups. The implementation of mutual cooperation carried out by children includes activities such as maintaining the cleanliness of the schoolyard, pulling weeds, tidying up toys after use, and organizing and cleaning equipment after activities. Based on the results found, the implementation of mutual cooperation has been proven to stimulate children's social development.

Article Information:

Received October 21, 2025

Revised November 28, 2025

Accepted December 31, 2025

Keywords: *Mutual cooperation, social development, early childhood*

INTRODUCTION

The golden age significantly influences development in adulthood. For educators and parents, the most important thing is to understand that every child has a strong sense of curiosity, and this needs to be developed so they can explore and optimize their potential (Komari & Aslan, 2025; Hasbullah & Nurhasanah, 2024; Sausan et al., 2023; Sufa & Setiawan, 2018).

Early childhood is a golden age, where a child's intelligence reaches 50% at age four, 80% at age eight, and the remaining 20% is acquired thereafter. This phase is the most appropriate time to cultivate individual character development. The 2013 curriculum for early childhood education identifies six developmental aspects based on development programs: religious and moral values, cognitive, physical motor skills, social and emotional skills, language, and arts (Ariyanti, 2016; Dewi, 2021).

How to cite:

Sari, M., Julisti, V., Putri, Z. D., Sameto, M. B. (2025). The Application of Mutual Cooperation on the Social Development of Children Aged 5-6 Years. *Ahlussunnah: Journal of Islamic Education*, 4(3), 779-784.

E-ISSN:

2827-9573

Published by:

The Institute for Research and Community Service

One step towards creating a just and prosperous society is to develop the potential of the next generation. This is regulated in Law No. 146 of 2013 concerning the National Education System. Article 1, point 14, states that early childhood education is a guidance effort for children from birth to six years of age through educational stimulation to support physical and mental growth so that children are ready to continue their education (Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia). The principle of mutual assistance in virtue and piety must be observed, as well as avoiding mutual assistance in sinful acts. Social development is related to how children adapt to existing societal norms (Mayar, 2013; Rosidah et al., 2024).

In the early stages of social development, children are still self-centered and unable to interact well with others. Children don't understand that there are different perspectives in their environment. They tend to do everything for their own benefit without considering others. Limited opportunities to interact and communicate with others can hinder a child's social progress. Therefore, social experiences gained in early childhood are crucial so that children learn to respect others, be able to cooperate, be responsible, and be willing to share, as well as show empathy and sympathy (Musyarofah, 2017).

The goal of developing social behavior in early childhood is to enable them to participate in social activities, such as working together, working in groups, having a happy and friendly attitude, building friendships, and practicing good ethics. Therefore, social development in early childhood education includes discipline, collaboration, mutual assistance, empathy, and responsibility (Putri, 2025).

To enhance the social development of early childhood, it is necessary to train them to participate in social activities such as cooperation (mutual cooperation). Mutual cooperation is a form of cooperation within a group to achieve positive results in accordance with desired goals. Effendi stated that mutual cooperation arises from the awareness and enthusiasm to work and share the results, without prioritizing personal interests, but for the common good, embodied in the term "Mutual cooperation".

Education focuses more on academic intelligence, while other abilities, such as motor skills, artistic skills, and social-emotional skills, are often neglected. Social-emotional intelligence is crucial for children because it allows them to be accepted in their social environment. Children who possess good social skills can be seen in how close they form friendships, how easily they interact with strangers, and how well they avoid conflict with their peers.

Cooperation variables in early childhood can be assessed through three main indicators: cooperation, attention, and sharing. These variables serve to evaluate how far children develop cooperative behaviors and attitudes, such as the ability to socialize in groups, a sense of caring for others, and a willingness to share tools or tasks (Akmaliani & Rohita, 2025).

Indicators of cooperation variables in early childhood, Cooperation: A child's ability to collaborate with peers to achieve a common goal, such as cleaning the classroom or completing a group assignment. Attention: A child's attitude of paying attention to and helping friends in need, as well as showing empathy and concern for others. Sharing: A child's willingness to lend or give items to friends, as well as sharing tasks and roles in certain activities.

Examples of variables and measurements. Collaboration, Variable: Ability to work together in cleaning the classroom. Example: Children remind each other to clean up and throw away trash in the proper place. Attention:

Variable: Showing concern for a friend who is sick. Example: The child encourages a friend who falls or helps a friend who is having difficulty. Sharing:

Variable: The attitude of being willing to share tools and food with other friends.
Example: The child lends a pencil or shares cookies with a friend willingly.

Ideally, every school should make cooperation part of a collective effort aimed at improving children's social interactions. However, in practice, many students still don't understand the meaning and benefits of cooperation. The author's experience during an internship at the Restu Ibu Playgroup showed that during the cooperation activity, two students did not participate in helping their friends, instead choosing to be engrossed in their toys and ignoring their surroundings.

To find out the reasons for the two students' non-participation in the cooperation activity, the author conducted interviews with them. When asked, "Why don't you help your friends tidy up the class?" they answered, "We don't want to help clean up, Teacher, we just want to play." From their answers, the author found indications of students' low understanding of the importance of cooperation, which made them prefer other activities that were less meaningful. Students' lack of understanding of the meaning and benefits of cooperation can be one of the factors that make them less interested and care to be involved in the activity.

To obtain more in-depth information, the author conducted initial observations at Restu Ibu Playgroup through interviews with one of the educators. The author wanted to determine whether students demonstrated a lack of cooperation from the moment they entered school.

From the results of an interview between the author and one of the educators at Restu Ibu Playgroup, she stated that out of ten students, about two students were not enthusiastic from the beginning to participate in social activities with classmates; they just sat quietly and enjoyed playing alone, and this still occurs to this day. Most students do not understand the meaning and benefits of cooperation because they rarely receive lessons about cooperation in class.

After getting information from the Restu Ibu Playgroup educator, the author continued by observing the students to monitor their activities using an observation sheet, to see what kind of cooperative attitude the students in the Restu Ibu Playgroup have.

Children's social development is not progressing well due to several factors. One is the lack of effort by teachers in training students to participate in mutual cooperation and mutual assistance activities. Teachers tend to focus more on students' academic abilities, resulting in low engagement in collaborative activities. In the context of social development through cooperation, an educator at Restu Ibu Playgroup stated that the actions taken by educators can be seen in the early stages of activities. At that time, teachers often only motivate students with the values of cooperation, mutual assistance, and the joy of sharing tasks. However, these efforts are not effective in improving children's collaborative skills, because children are active learners who require meaningful learning experiences through active participation, not just listening to explanations.

METHODS

In this study, a qualitative research method is used, often referred to as a naturalistic research method because the research was conducted in natural object conditions; also known as an ethnographic method, because it was initially used more for research in the field of cultural anthropology; called qualitative because the data collected and analyzed are qualitative (Sugiyono, 2012; Engkizar et al., 2023; 2025; Lestari et al., 2023; Putri & Salim, 2025; Arifinata et al., 2025). In this context, the researcher attempts to explain the application of mutual cooperation in the social development of children aged 5-6 years at the Restu Ibu Playgroup. Data collection techniques are a very important step in research, because the main purpose of research is to collect data. Without an understanding of data collection techniques,

researchers will not obtain data that meets the specified criteria (Sugiyono, 2012; Baroud et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2025; Alatise & Akinfolarin, 2025; Salsabila et al., 2025). Some data collection techniques include: i) Observation, ii) interviews, and iii) documentation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Social Development of 5-6 Year Old Children in the Restu Ibu Playgroup

From the results of the study conducted, researchers obtained information from interviews with teachers and principals, as well as observations of students. First, researchers interviewed the principal, followed by interviews with teachers. Explanations from the principal and teachers indicated that the implementation of mutual cooperation at Restu Ibu Playgroup has met expectations according to the children's ages, because they believe the implementation of mutual cooperation can stimulate children's social development and help them socialize well. For example, children demonstrate behavior that reflects compliance with rules, understand the importance of independence, demonstrate patience, are willing to listen when others are talking, do not hurt friends, and are willing to help friends without being asked. The school also has a program for children's social development in the form of mutual cooperation on Saturdays, before Independence Day, before the fasting month, and at the beginning and end of school. The principal and teachers are also given the opportunity to participate in seminars and workshops on early childhood development, such as workshops, training, seminars, and comparative studies. Strategies used by teachers to improve children's social development include teaching them to share, understanding empathy, appreciating children's behavior, encouraging them to play outside, and providing motivation. One way for teachers to motivate children is by fostering self-confidence and providing facilities for learning activities at school.

Social development that demonstrates compliance with rules. To improve children's social skills, Restu Ibu Playgroup implements mutual cooperation. According to STTPA, aspects of social development in children include developing patience appropriate to their age, social responsibility, and various factors that influence social development, such as biology, the environment, and interpersonal relationships.

The Implementation of Mutual Cooperation on the Social Development of 5-6 Year Old Children in the Restu Ibu Playgroup

Social development is a sign of maturity in interacting with others. This process can be understood as an effort to learn to adapt to group norms, moral values, and traditions that unite and interact harmoniously. Therefore, the way humans behave in their social lives is inseparable from the values and norms that govern the relationship between humans and their environment.

In the author's opinion, social development in children is a characteristic or trait of various social behaviors that show how children socialize, communicate, and interact with other people or with friends of the same age.

The implementation of mutual cooperation has been proven effective in improving the social aspects of early childhood. Indicators of the application of mutual cooperation in social development include children's active participation in community service activities, participation in groups, and mutual assistance and cooperation.

CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the social development of children aged 5-6 years at Restu Ibu Playgroup is in line with expectations, where children can interact with friends and the environment and are able to work together in groups. The implementation of cooperation carried out by the children includes

activities such as cleaning the schoolyard, pulling weeds, tidying up toys after playing, and organizing and storing equipment after activities. These findings indicate that the implementation of cooperation can stimulate children's social development.

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Ahlussunnah: Journal of Islamic Education

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