

HABIT OF APPLYING MAGIC WORDS (EXCUSE ME, PLEASE SORRY AND THANK YOU) IN SUPPORTING THE CHARACTER OF EARLY CHILDHOOD IN LITTLE STAR KINDERGARTEN

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Abstract

Character education in early childhood has an important role in building an independent and confident personality. This study aims to determine how the habit of applying the magic words excuse me, please, sorry and thank you in supporting the character of early childhood in TKIT Little Star Surabaya. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. The description is compiled based on data obtained from the field, precisely at TKIT Little Star. This study uses observation and interview techniques as data collection and the subjects of this study include class teachers and A1 students who are the application of the habit of the magic words excuse me, please, sorry and thank you. In the implementation of this habit does not always run smoothly there are challenges in the implementation but with the example and real examples from the teacher makes students see and do the habit of the magic words so that ethical manners in students are formed and support character education and cooperation of parents at home is also one of the supporters. Character when it has been formed from an early age will be carried over into adulthood.

Keywords: Magic Words, Character Education, Early Childhood

Abstrak

Pendidikan karakter pada anak usia dini memiliki peran penting dalam membangun kepribadian yang mandiri dan penuh percaya diri. Penelitian ini memiliki tujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana pembiasaan penerapan kata ajaib permisi, tolong maaf dan terima kasih dalam mendukung karakter anak usia dini di TKIT Little Star Surabaya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Deskripsi tersebut disusun berdasarkan data yang diperoleh dari lapangan, tepatnya di TKIT Little Star. Penelitian ini menggunakan teknik observasi dan wawancara sebagai pengumpulan data dan subjek penelitian ini mencakup guru kelas dan siswa A1 yang menjadi penerapan pembiasaan kata ajaib permisi, tolong, maaf dan terima kasih. Dalam penerapan pembiasaan ini tidak selalu berjalan mulus ada tantangan dalam penerapan namun dengan keteladanan dan contoh nyata dari guru membuat siswa melihat dan melakukan pembiasaan kata ajaib sehingga etika sopan santun pada siswa terbentuk dan mendukung pendidikan karakter dan kerja sama orang tua di rumah juga salah satu pendukung. Karakter ketika sudah terbentuk sejak dini maka akan terbawa hingga dewasa.

Kata Kunci: Kata Ajaib, Pendidikan Karakter, Anak Usia Dini



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INTRODUCTION

Character education in early childhood is the main foundation in building their personality and social behavior. One of the main aspects of this character education is teaching about fundamental social values, such as excuse me, please, sorry, and thank you. These values are not just expressions of politeness, but also reflect an attitude of mutual respect, empathy, and concern for others, which are the basis for harmonious social relationships.¹ In reality, although these values are very important, not all early childhood automatically understand and are accustomed to saying them in everyday life. This shows that there are obstacles in early childhood character education that need more attention.

Early childhood education is a form of educational service that focuses on laying the foundation for growth according to the uniqueness and stages of development that are appropriate for the child's age group. Knowledge of early childhood language development plays a very important role in supporting effective basic language skills learning. For parents and teachers, understanding early childhood language development is very useful for encouraging increased language skills in children.²

Character education in early childhood plays a very important role in shaping the personality and positive behavior of children, this has a great impact on their social and emotional life in the future. When they are still young, children are experiencing a very sensitive period of development, where the values and habits taught to them will form the basis of their character. Getting used to character education continuously and consistently is the main key in forming a young generation that is intelligent and has noble morals. Character education can be started from the age of 0-5 years, when children are in the golden age.

The habit of character education is not only carried out in the school environment, but also in the family and community environment. According to research conducted by Nurhadi, the habit of character at home through the daily behavior of parents greatly influences the development of children's character.³ Parents who actively teach positive values, such as mutual respect, honesty, and empathy, will help shape children who have good social skills.

In addition, in the school environment, character education can be carried out through direct teaching or activities that support the development of moral values, such as cooperation, responsibility, and discipline. A study by Sulistyaningsih showed that character education

¹ Endah Purwanti and Dodi Ahmad Haerudin, "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Terhadap Anak Usia Dini Melalui Pembiasaan Dan Keteladanan," *ThufuLA: Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan Guru Raudhatul Athfal* 8, no. 2 (2020): 260, <https://doi.org/10.21043/thufula.v8i2.8429>.

² Aisyah Isna, "Perkembangan Bahasa Anak Usia Dini," *Al-Athfal* 2, no. 2 (2019): 62–69.

³ Ali Nurhadi, "Implementasi Manajemen Strategi Berbasis Pembiasaan Dalam Menumbuhkan Karakter Religius Siswa," *Al-Afkar* 3, no. 1 (2020): 65–76, https://al-afkar.com/index.php/Afkar_Journal/issue/view/5.

programs based on routine activities and positive habits in schools can significantly improve children's social and emotional attitudes.⁴

According to Shaleh, character education in early childhood is an effort to instill commendable behavior in children, including behavior in worship, as a good citizen, interacting with others and the environment, and positive behavior that supports the success of children's lives. Character education is carried out in various environments where children are. The family is the first environment that children encounter, where parents have the responsibility to instill good attitudes in children. Parents should not only rely on teachers in educating children about character, both parents and teachers act as examples that will be imitated by children, both in words and actions. Instilling character in children can be done through advice, habituation, role models, and reinforcement.⁵

Human character has become part of a person's personality and is reflected in their daily behavior. Since birth, humans have had character potential that can be seen through their cognitive abilities and innate traits. This innate character will develop along with the learning experiences gained from the environment. The family is the first learning environment that children receive and will be a strong foundation for forming their character in the future. After adulthood, intelligence and personality behavior tend to be more stable, therefore, the most appropriate period to form intelligence and character is in childhood to adolescence.⁶ According to Mi'rotul, character education is a shared responsibility for all educators, both at home and at school. The right approach is a learning effort that focuses more on children, where children are encouraged to explore, discover new things, and develop their own abilities. Children are encouraged to be active and find out things that interest them. Children's activities, such as playing or meaningful games, allow children to recognize and apply concepts related to life.⁷

The habit of character education also plays an important role in reducing negative behavior among children, such as violence, dishonesty, and bullying. Habits that are applied from an early age can help children understand and practice moral values in everyday life, and form attitudes that will last until they are adults.

⁴ S Sulistyaningsih, T J Raharjo, and ..., "Konsep Pendidikan Budi Pekerti Luhur Untuk Mendukung Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter (PPK)(Studi Kasus: Organisasi Kejiwaan Pangestu)," *Prosiding Seminar ...*, 2021, <https://proceeding.unnes.ac.id/index.php/snpasca/article/view/860>.

⁵ Muh Shaleh, "Pola Asuh Orang Tua Dalam Mengembangkan Aspek Sosial Emosional Anak Usia 5-6 Tahun," *Murhum : Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 4, no. 1 (March 9, 2023): 86–102, <https://doi.org/10.37985/murhum.v4i1.144>.

⁶ Atik Latifah, "Peran Lingkungan Dan Pola Asuh Orang Tua Terhadap Pembentukan Karakter Anak Usia Dini," (*JAPRA*) *Jurnal Pendidikan Raudhatul Athfal (JAPRA)* 3, no. 2 (2020): 101–12, <https://doi.org/10.15575/japra.v3i2.8785>.

⁷ Riza Mi'rotul, "Pendidikan Peran Bagi Holistik Karakter Pengembangan Usia Anak," *Jurnal Dimensi Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran* 11, no. 1 (2023): 154–65.

In general, the habituation of character education in early childhood needs to be implemented comprehensively, involving the active role of parents, teachers, and the community. This will equip children with values that support their personal development, so that they can become individuals who are not only academically successful, but also able to make positive contributions to society.

Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 87 of 2017 Article 3 stipulates 18 values of strengthening national character education that are expected to be taught to students, namely: 1) Religious, 2) Honest, 3) Tolerance, 4) Hard Work, 5) Creative, 6) Independent, 7) Democratic, 8) Discipline, 9) Friendly/Communicative, 10) Curiosity, 11) Appreciation of Achievement, 12) Love of Reading, 13) National Spirit, 14) Love of the Country, 15) Love of Peace, 16) Care for the Environment, 17) Care for Social Affairs, 18) Responsibility.

Building a child's character must start from an early age, even in the womb. During pregnancy, mothers must consume halal and nutritious food and do many positive deeds. The focus of this paper is on early childhood education, which includes children of kindergarten or preschool age. At this age, children have the desire to play, practice in groups, ask questions, imitate, and create new things. They also experience development in language acquisition and begin to build independence. However, not all children get enough attention, affection, and education from their parents.⁸

Thus, the instillation of character values in early childhood cannot be formed in a short time. This process requires education that is carried out continuously or through habituation in learning. In this case, the role of teachers or educators is very important to build positive habits by applying character values to early childhood. Teachers can be considered as the main factor in the implementation of character education. To find out the extent to which character values have been embedded in students, an assessment is needed. This assessment provides information about how deep the instillation and application of character values in children, especially early childhood, in their environment.

Early childhood assessment is different from the assessment model at the elementary and secondary education levels. Early childhood assessment is carried out through observation, recording, and documentation of children's activities. This assessment is not only used to measure the success of a program, but also to monitor the progress and development of children's

⁸ Nur Anisyah, Siti Marwah, and Vivi Yumarni, "Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Pembentukan Akhlak Anak Pra Sekolah," *Murhum : Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 4, no. 1 (2023): 287–95, <https://doi.org/10.37985/murhum.v4i1.164>.

learning. The implementation of early childhood assessment is carried out in stages and continuously, so that the progress of children's learning and development can be known.⁹

Character education aims to develop the values that shape the character of the nation, namely Pancasila, which includes: 1) Developing the potential of students to become individuals with good hearts, good thoughts, and good behavior, 2) Creating a nation with Pancasila character, 3) Developing the potential of citizens to have an attitude of self-confidence, a sense of nationalism, and love for fellow human beings.

This study shows that the habit of using magic words such as excuse me, please, sorry, and thank you can help shape children's character to be more empathetic, cooperative, and have the ability to interact well in their social environment. Several studies also show that many children are not yet accustomed to using these words in everyday life, both at home and at school. This unfamiliarity can be caused by a lack of direct examples from parents, an unsupportive environment, or minimal emphasis in formal education that teaches these politeness values consistently. Therefore, it is very important to understand how to effectively get used to these polite expressions in early childhood.

This issue is very relevant because the habit of polite behavior in children from an early age has a great influence on the child's social development in the future. Children who are accustomed to saying words such as excuse me, please, sorry, and thank you are not only easier to interact with others, but are also better able to show empathy, respect the feelings of others, and manage social relationships well. For example, children who are accustomed to saying thank you to people who give help will appreciate the kindness of others more, while children who often say sorry tend to be more sensitive to mistakes and have a greater sense of responsibility. Thus, research on the habituation of these magical expressions is very important to identify effective strategies in early childhood character education.

In addition, this study is important to provide practical guidance for parents, educators, and educational institutions in designing an effective approach to accustom children to saying magic words in everyday life. Habituation carried out in the right way, either through adult behavioral models or fun activity-based and game-based approaches, can accelerate the process of internalizing these politeness values in children. If this habituation is started early, children will not only learn about the importance of ethics in social life but will also develop positive attitudes that will have a good impact on their lives in the future.¹⁰

⁹ Veny Iswantiningtyas and Widi Wulansari, "Pentingnya Penilaian Pendidikan Karakter Anak Usia Dini," *Proceedings of The ICECRS* 1, no. 3 (2018): 197–204, <https://doi.org/10.21070/picecrs.v1i3.1396>.

¹⁰ Much Deiniatur Uswatun Hasanah, "Character Education in Early Childhood Based on Family," *Early Childhood Research Journal*, no. March (2018): 1–18.

TKIT Little Star Surabaya is a school that was established in 2008. This child-friendly kindergarten has a vision of forming a generation of robbani and achievers and has a mission to form children's characters with noble morals, form independent personalities and develop children's thinking power. Therefore, this is what prompted researchers to conduct research on the habituation of the application of the magic words excuse me, please, sorry and thank you at TKIT Little Star Surabaya. Based on this background, researchers formulated the following problems: 1) How is the habituation of the use of the magic words excuse me, please, sorry and thank you at TKIT Little Star Surabaya? 2) What is the impact of the use of the words excuse me, please, sorry and thank you in supporting the development of children's character at TKIT Little Star Surabaya? This study aims to determine and analyze how the habituation of these magic words at TKIT Little Star Surabaya can support the development of children's character.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a qualitative descriptive method.¹¹ The aim is to describe and analyze the habits that are carried out as part of character formation. The description is compiled based on data obtained directly in the field, especially at TKIT Little Star Surabaya.¹² The data collection techniques used in this study were interviews and observations. The subjects of the study included class teachers and students of Kindergarten A1 TKIT Little Star in the 2024-2025 academic year who were involved in the habituation of magic words such as excuse me, please, sorry, and thank you. The main data source was obtained through interviews with class teachers, while supporting data was collected from articles and journals that were related to this study.¹³ The data analysis model applied in this study refers to the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three main steps: (1) data reduction, which is the stage of selecting, organizing, and simplifying the collected data; (2) data presentation, which means arranging the reduced data in an easy-to-understand format; and (3) drawing conclusions or verification, which involving analysis and interpretation to conclude results from existing data.

¹¹ Unika Prihatsanti, Suryanto Suryanto, and Wiwin Hendriani, "Menggunakan Studi Kasus Sebagai Metode Ilmiah Dalam Psikologi," *Buletin Psikologi* 26, no. 2 (2018): 126, <https://doi.org/10.22146/buletinpsikologi.38895>.

¹² Sugiyono, "Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Dan Kualitatif Serta R&D," *Alfabeta*, CV, no. April (2013): 5–24.

¹³ Mutia Sari et al., "Explanatory Survey Dalam Metode Penelitian Deskriptif Kuantitatif," *Jurnal Pendidikan Sains Dan Komputer* 3, no. 01 (2022): 10–16, <https://doi.org/10.47709/jpsk.v3i01.1953>.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The habituation of magic words in character education is carried out from July to October. In its implementation, mentoring activities are carried out for four months and participate in implementing habituation to students.

The habit of saying excuse me, please, sorry and thank you in character formation of early childhood

As forgetting used to the words excuse me, please, sorry and thank you in character education as follows:

1. The teacher gives an example to the students and gets the students used to saying the word excuse me by bowing slightly every time they pass in front of the teacher or in front of friends. The habit of saying the word excuse me is carried out for one month so that students get used to saying the word excuse me. The results of the observations that the researcher saw were that students had started to get used to saying the word excuse me and bowing their bodies without needing to be reminded again.



Figure 1. Students say excuse me and bow their bodies as they pass in front of their friends.

2. The teacher gives examples to students and gets students used to saying please when they have difficulty doing something, this also aims to get children used to expressing their feelings when they have difficulty, this is done either with the teacher or with their friends, with this habit being carried out for one month. The results of the observations that the researcher saw, students have started to get used to saying please when they have difficulty doing something, for example, like tidying up toys, students say please to tidy up toys together and say please with the teacher when they have difficulty opening something without needing to be told by the teacher to say please.



Figure 2. Students say please to tidy up toys together.

3. The teacher gives examples and gets students used to saying sorry when they have difficulties where at their age they are very emotional so that when they want to apologize it is difficult both with friends and with teachers so that the habit of saying sorry is carried out for one month. The results of the observations that the researcher saw were that the development of students was very good, they were able to say sorry without being told.



Figure 3. A student says sorry when he accidentally makes his friend fall.

4. The teacher gives an example and gets students used to saying thank you when they have been helped by a friend or teacher as a form of gratitude for being helped, this habit is carried out for one month. The results of the observations that the researcher saw were that students began to get used to doing it without needing to be ordered and reminded again by the teacher.



Figure 4. Students say thank you to the teacher

TKIT Little Star is a school that focuses on character education and development of independence in early childhood. Therefore, observations were conducted to see how the habit of applying magic words such as excuse me, please, sorry, and thank you. After implementing the habit in students to support character education, the author conducted an interview with the A1 class teacher who accompanies students every day at school.

The author prepares the following question points:

1. Why is it important to teach the words excuse me, please, sorry and thank you to young students?
2. How can the habit of using the words excuse me, please, sorry and thank you support the development of students' character?
3. What methods or strategies do schools use to get students used to using the words excuse me, please, sorry and thank you?
4. How do teachers exemplify the use of the words excuse me, please, sorry and thank you in everyday life?

In the interview results with the A1 class teacher, the following explanation was obtained:

1. - Teaching students to be polite to each other and to their elders, if they are trained from an early age, it will become a habit when they are adults.
- Encourage students to communicate positively by getting used to using the word please when they need help.
- Train students to empathize with fellow students and with others and also train students to understand other people's feelings and admit mistakes that students make.
- Instill moral and ethical values to students and also increase students' self-confidence so that students know how to express themselves.

2. - Forming a polite and respectful attitude by saying Excuse me teaches children to respect the space and rights of others, building a polite and respectful character in social interactions. With this habit, students learn to respect teachers, friends, and their surroundings.
 - Developing Empathy and Caring Characters by saying Please trains students to help each other and understand that cooperation is an important part of community life. With this habit, it fosters sensitivity to the needs of others and encourages real action to help.
 - Cultivating an Attitude of Responsibility and Humility by saying Sorry encourages students to admit mistakes and take responsibility for their actions, which is important for developing an honest and humble character. This attitude helps students learn to correct mistakes and maintain good relationships with others.
 - Encourage an Attitude of Gratitude by saying Thank you trains students to appreciate the help, attention, or gifts of others, both small and large. By this, instilling the value of gratitude and a sense of satisfaction with what is owned, helps to form a selfless person.
 - Increasing Social Awareness by habitually using these words helps students understand prevailing social norms and ethics. They become more sensitive to social rules, which helps them adapt in various environments.
 - Strengthening Positive Relationships by using these words creates a harmonious and respectful atmosphere in the classroom. Students who are accustomed to speaking politely tend to be more easily accepted by their friends, thus supporting the formation of a friendly and collaborative character.
 - Building a Character with Integrity with this habit instills essential moral values, such as respecting others, having self-awareness, and responsibility, which shape students' personal integrity.

This habit not only creates a better atmosphere in the school environment, but also helps students grow into individuals with strong character, ethics, and are ready to face social challenges in the future.

3. - Teachers are role models in everyday life at school. By consistently using the magic words excuse me, please, sorry and thank you, students will follow suit, for example, "please close the door" and saying thank you when they have been helped will make children do the same thing if they do it every day and hear it every day.
 - The habit of students' activities is to always say excuse me when passing in front of a teacher or friend and say thank you when helped by a friend or teacher. When accidentally bumping into a friend, they will be accustomed to apologizing even though at first it feels difficult and they don't want to do it, but if they continue to get used to it, it will become a

habit without having to be told and can get students used to always saying please when they need help, such as having difficulty opening food or after doing activities to clean up together, even though at first they need to be provoked with the words "say what?". However, after continuing to do it and being reminded, there is no need to be provoked, they will say it by themselves.

- Teachers give praise where children their age are very happy with appreciation such as when they dare to apologize first when making a mistake and admit their mistake, then the teacher will say "masyaallah, great, come on, give the teacher a high five first."

- The teacher invites students to recall at the end of the learning activities and what activities have been done and does not forget to say thank you to the students for their good cooperation that day, including getting children used to always saying good things such as thank you, sorry or please.

- Teachers also work together with parents at home so that these good habits do not stop at school but continue at home as well.

- Teachers also always remind students to always say the magic words excuse me, please, sorry and thank you. When they forget, the teacher will remind them to say these words. When they have been helped to say something, the students will immediately say thank you and this continues to be done until the students get used to it.

With this strategy, students will get used to using the words excuse me, please, sorry and thank you naturally in everyday life. This habit will strengthen the character of students as individuals who are polite, empathetic and respectful of others.

4. The teacher provides examples of saying the words excuse me, please, sorry and thank you in various everyday situations to provide an example for students, such as:

- Excuse me, the teacher says hello and excuse me, ma'am, may I come in? Or excuse me, ma'am, may I come in, while bowing my head.
- The teacher exemplifies the word please by saying please get a tissue, son, or by saying please sit down in a pious position, or by saying please pick up the food that has fallen.
- The teacher said sorry, it was an accident or sorry, ma'am, the teacher didn't see it.
- The teacher says thank you, son, for a good day or thank you for taking turns speaking, thank you for helping, teacher.

With this, students can see directly the daily life of the teacher at school and will be imitated by the students.

The results of the interview above regarding the habituation of using magic words such as excuse me, please, sorry, and thank you in the formation of early childhood character have

several significant impacts in a broader context, covering the fields of education, social, and culture, including:

Strengthening Character in the Golden Age

The golden age (0-8 years) is a critical period in child development where the child's brain develops very rapidly and character formation becomes the foundation for their personality and social skills. Strengthening character in early childhood aims to form individuals with integrity, independence, and good personality. Where the habit of saying excuse me, please, sorry and thank you plays a very important role in the formation of basic character in early childhood such as politeness, ethics, empathy and responsibility. Early childhood is at a critical stage of development, where the habits formed tend to persist into adulthood. So that the daily application of the words excuse me, please, sorry and thank you helps children to respect others. So why did the researcher conduct this research in the results of the observation that TKIT Little Star prioritizes character education for early childhood written in the mission of TKIT Little Star written to form a character with noble morals prioritizing character and manners towards others at the golden age of very young students are directed and formed by looking at everyday life and daily habits that teachers do with early habits will be carried over until they are adults.

Improving the Quality of Social Interactions in Early Childhood

Social interaction is a child's ability to communicate, cooperate, and establish relationships with others. In early childhood (0 - 6 years) improving the quality of social interaction is very important to shape personality, empathy, and social skills that will be useful throughout their lives. By implementing the habit of the Magic words excuse me, please, sorry and thank you will train students to communicate basic and express their feelings, develop student empathy from an early age, help students to overcome conflicts and Little Star Kindergarten implements all of these things to make students make schools that provide comfort.

The Role of Teachers and Parents as Role Models for Early Childhood

In early childhood, at an early age, children are in the imitative learning stage, where they learn by imitating the behavior of adults around them. Teachers and parents, as the main figures in a child's life, have a very important role in providing positive role models. These role models shape the values, attitudes, and character of children that form the basis for their personality development. Parents and teachers must work together to instill consistent values, such as honesty and responsibility. Good communication between teachers and parents ensures that children receive similar messages at home and at school. Parental involvement in school

activities and their participation in school events will support these activities and strengthen the relationship between teachers, parents, and children. Providing a supportive environment, parents and teachers must create a conducive atmosphere for students to learn comfortably both at home and at school. With good collaboration between teachers and parents, it can support the habit of using magic words such as excuse me, please, sorry, and thank you can be achieved optimally.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that the habit of applying the magic words excuse me, please, sorry and thank you has a very big influence on the character education of early childhood. During the four months of implementation and habituation of students at TKIT Little Star, they have been accustomed to using magic words in their daily lives at school, both with their friends and with teachers, so that the manners and ethics of TKIT Little Star students are very good, students do and use magic words comfortably without pressure and also the support of parents at home is very important so that this habituation does not stop at school. The researcher hopes that this research does not stop here and can continue to form children's character education in different aspects so that the ethics of early childhood are not lost.

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