



Issues and Barriers to Social-Emotional Development in Early Childhood

Naimatul Ulfia Rahma^{1*}, Zusy Aryanti², Dwi Enggal Wahyuni³

¹⁻² Universitas Islam Negeri Jurai Siwo, Indonesia

³ Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Indonesia

email: naimatul00@gmail.com¹

Article Info :

Received:
18-04-2026
Revised:
28-04-2026
Accepted:
10-05-2026

Abstract

Social-emotional development is a crucial aspect of early childhood development as it influences children's ability to regulate emotions, interact with others, and adapt to various social situations. However, many young children experience socio-emotional problems and developmental barriers that may affect their future growth and well-being. This study aims to identify and analyze the problems and barriers to social-emotional development in early childhood based on findings from previous studies. The research employed a qualitative library research method through a systematic review of relevant scientific articles on early childhood socio-emotional development. The findings indicate that common socio-emotional problems include poor emotional regulation, difficulties in peer interaction, social anxiety, aggressive behavior, social withdrawal, low self-confidence, and limited abilities in cooperation and empathy. These barriers are influenced by multiple factors such as inappropriate parenting styles, unsupportive social environments, negative peer experiences, excessive gadget use, and insufficient socio-emotional stimulation. The study concludes that emotional regulation is a central factor in determining children's socio-emotional development outcomes. Therefore, active involvement from families, schools, and the wider community is essential to provide appropriate support and stimulation to optimize early childhood socio-emotional development.

Keywords: Early Childhood, Social-Emotional Development, Emotional Regulation, Developmental Barriers, Parenting Styles.



©2022 Authors.. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License.
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

INTRODUCTION

Social-emotional development is widely acknowledged as one of the most essential domains of early childhood development because it establishes the foundation for children's interpersonal relationships, emotional well-being, and lifelong learning. During the early years, children begin to acquire the ability to recognize and regulate emotions, develop empathy, cooperate with others, and adapt to various social environments. These competencies not only facilitate children's successful participation in educational settings but also influence their future psychological adjustment, academic achievement, and quality of life. Consequently, promoting healthy social-emotional development has become a central concern in early childhood education, as educators and researchers increasingly recognize that children's developmental success should be evaluated not only through cognitive outcomes but also through their emotional competence and social adaptability (Fuadia, 2022). In response to these growing concerns, numerous studies have emphasized the importance of creating supportive environments that foster children's emotional security and meaningful social interactions from an early age.

The development of children's social-emotional competence is a multidimensional process influenced by continuous interactions among individual characteristics, family environments, educational experiences, and broader social contexts. Family remains the primary environment in which children first learn emotional expression, communication, empathy, and behavioral regulation through everyday interactions with parents and caregivers (Lesmi, 2022). Positive parenting practices characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and consistent guidance have been associated with stronger emotional regulation and healthier social relationships among young children. Likewise, educational institutions contribute significantly to children's social-emotional growth by providing opportunities for

collaborative learning, emotional expression, conflict resolution, and positive peer interaction under the guidance of teachers (Hanifah & Kurniati, 2024). These findings suggest that social-emotional competence develops through the combined influence of home and school environments rather than through isolated developmental experiences.

Despite increasing awareness of its importance, many young children continue to experience social-emotional difficulties that interfere with their developmental progress. Previous studies have reported that excessive exposure to digital devices may reduce children's opportunities for direct social interaction, thereby contributing to emotional instability, social withdrawal, and limited communication skills (Purwadi & Fitriyani, 2023). Similarly, overprotective parenting practices may unintentionally restrict children's opportunities to develop independence and confidence in social situations, resulting in anxiety, dependence, and difficulties establishing relationships with peers (Noviana et al., 2026). Other studies have identified bullying, peer rejection, and inadequate emotional regulation as significant barriers that negatively affect children's self-esteem, emotional security, and social participation (Yani et al., 2023). Furthermore, the educational disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of face-to-face interaction, as prolonged social isolation limited children's opportunities to develop essential social and emotional competencies through everyday classroom experiences (Kusumawardani & Rukiyati, 2023).

Although previous research has identified numerous determinants of children's social-emotional development, the existing literature remains fragmented in both scope and perspective. Most empirical studies have concentrated on individual variables, such as parenting styles, digital technology use, school environments, or peer relationships, without adequately explaining how these factors interact to influence children's overall social-emotional development (Amalia et al., 2023). Furthermore, many studies emphasize identifying developmental problems rather than synthesizing evidence regarding their underlying causes, developmental consequences, and effective intervention strategies. As a result, current knowledge tends to be dispersed across different research contexts and disciplinary perspectives, making it difficult to establish a comprehensive understanding of the complex challenges affecting children's social-emotional well-being. Such fragmentation limits the practical application of existing evidence for educators, families, and policymakers seeking integrated approaches to support early childhood development.

Another limitation of the existing literature is the lack of comprehensive evidence synthesis that integrates findings across diverse educational and cultural contexts. While individual studies provide valuable insights into specific aspects of social-emotional development, few have systematically examined recurring patterns of developmental barriers, risk factors, and intervention approaches reported in previous empirical research. Consequently, important relationships among family environments, educational practices, technological influences, and children's emotional experiences remain insufficiently integrated within a unified analytical framework. Addressing this gap is essential for generating a broader understanding of social-emotional development and identifying evidence-based strategies that can effectively support children's emotional well-being and social competence in contemporary educational settings.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to systematically review and synthesize empirical research concerning the issues and barriers affecting social-emotional development in early childhood. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, this study identifies the dominant forms of social-emotional problems experienced by young children, analyzes the factors contributing to these developmental challenges, and examines intervention strategies reported across previous studies. By integrating evidence from diverse research findings, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of children's social-emotional development while offering valuable theoretical and practical implications for researchers, educators, parents, and policymakers in designing more effective strategies to promote children's social and emotional well-being.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to comprehensively examine the issues and barriers affecting social-emotional development in early childhood. The review was conducted following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) guidelines to ensure methodological transparency, rigor, and reproducibility. Relevant literature was identified through comprehensive searches of major academic databases, including

Google Scholar, Scopus, and Crossref, using combinations of keywords such as social-emotional development, early childhood, social-emotional barriers, emotional competence, and early childhood education. Articles published between 2020 and 2025 were considered to ensure the inclusion of recent empirical evidence. Studies were eligible if they focused on children in early childhood settings, addressed issues or barriers related to social-emotional development, were published in peer-reviewed journals, and were available in English or Indonesian. Conference papers, book chapters, review articles, opinion papers, and studies lacking sufficient methodological information were excluded. The literature selection process followed the four PRISMA phases: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion, with the complete selection procedure presented in the PRISMA flow diagram.

The selected studies were analyzed using a qualitative thematic synthesis approach to identify recurring patterns, research trends, determinants, and intervention strategies related to social-emotional development in early childhood. Data extracted from each article included publication characteristics, research design, participant characteristics, identified social-emotional issues, contributing factors, and key findings. The extracted information was systematically organized into analytical matrices to facilitate comparison across studies and the identification of common themes. To enhance the trustworthiness of the review, the study adhered to the PRISMA reporting standards throughout the review process, applied predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria consistently, and maintained a transparent documentation of the article selection and data extraction procedures. These methodological procedures were intended to minimize selection bias, improve analytical consistency, and ensure that the synthesized findings accurately reflect the current body of empirical evidence regarding social-emotional development in early childhood.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The synthesis of existing literature on early childhood social-emotional development indicates that this developmental domain is shaped by a complex interaction of family dynamics, educational environments, peer relationships, and digital exposure. Across studies, socio-emotional development is consistently understood as a non-linear process that depends on the quality of early relational experiences and environmental stimulation provided to the child. Emotional regulation, social interaction ability, and behavioral adjustment are not innate capacities that develop in isolation, but are gradually constructed through continuous interaction within ecological systems surrounding the child (Fuadia, 2022; Aghnaita & Irmawati, 2022). In this context, developmental barriers emerge when one or more systems fail to provide consistent emotional support or adequate opportunities for social engagement.

Table 1. Synthesis of Empirical Findings on Early Childhood Socio-Emotional Development

Author (Year)	Focus	Key Finding
Fuadia (2022)	Socio-emotional development	Influenced by family, school, and environment
A'yun et al. (2024)	Social skills factors	Parenting and environment are dominant determinants
Amalia et al. (2023)	SLR early childhood	Development is multidimensional and contextual
Defaza & Vitaloka (2025)	Family role	Family is key determinant of emotional development
Daisiu & Yunitasari (2025)	Parenting (ADHD/ABK)	Parenting style affects emotional regulation
Rufiati (2024)	Attachment	Secure attachment enhances emotional intelligence
Purwadi & Fitriyani (2023)	Gadget use	Excessive use reduces social interaction

Kusumawardani & Rukiyati (2023)	E-learning	Digital learning reduces peer interaction
Yani et al. (2023)	Bullying	Negative peer experiences disrupt emotional stability
Rahmah et al. (2025)	Teacher strategy	Teacher support improves social-emotional skills

The integrated findings presented in Table 1 highlight that family environment constitutes the most dominant factor influencing early socio-emotional development. Parenting style and attachment quality play a central role in shaping children's emotional regulation, self-confidence, and ability to interact socially. Children raised in supportive and responsive caregiving environments tend to exhibit higher emotional stability, stronger empathy, and better social adaptability. In contrast, authoritarian or overly protective parenting patterns are associated with emotional dysregulation, reduced autonomy, and limited social engagement. These patterns align with attachment theory, which emphasizes that early caregiver relationships form the foundation for later socio-emotional functioning.

Beyond family influence, the literature also consistently identifies digital exposure and peer-related experiences as significant contributors to socio-emotional outcomes. Excessive gadget use and reduced face-to-face interaction limit children's opportunities to develop essential social competencies such as cooperation, empathy, and conflict resolution. From a social learning perspective, reduced interpersonal interaction restricts observational learning processes that are essential for emotional and behavioral development in early childhood. In parallel, negative peer experiences such as bullying are strongly associated with emotional distress, anxiety, and withdrawal behaviors, indicating that emotional safety is a critical prerequisite for healthy socio-emotional development. Collectively, these findings suggest that socio-emotional barriers arise not from a single source, but from the accumulation of risks across multiple developmental contexts.

The role of educators and school environments emerges as a compensatory and protective system that can mitigate socio-emotional risks originating from family or peer contexts. Teachers function not only as knowledge facilitators but also as emotional regulators who model appropriate social behavior and guide children in developing empathy, cooperation, and self-control. Supportive classroom environments provide structured opportunities for children to engage in prosocial behavior and emotional expression through guided interaction and collaborative learning. Overall, the synthesis indicates that early childhood socio-emotional development is best understood as an interconnected system in which emotional regulation serves as a central mechanism linking family, digital, peer, and educational influences, thereby requiring holistic and multi-layered intervention strategies.

Parental Care as a Determinant of Early Childhood Socio-Emotional Barriers

The synthesis of literature indicates that parental care represents the most influential determinant in early childhood socio-emotional development, particularly in shaping emotional regulation, social interaction abilities, and the formation of self-concept. Across the reviewed studies, parenting is consistently identified as the earliest and most fundamental context in which children learn to recognize, interpret, and regulate emotions through daily interactions with caregivers. Variations in parenting style such as authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative approaches are shown to produce significantly different developmental outcomes in socio-emotional competence. Early caregiver-child relationships function not only as emotional bonds but also as the primary structure through which children internalize behavioral norms and emotional responses. Therefore, deficiencies in parenting quality can directly contribute to socio-emotional barriers during early childhood development.

Further synthesis of the literature shows that parenting quality is strongly associated with children's emotional stability and social adaptation skills. Warm, responsive, and consistent caregiving tends to support the development of emotional regulation, empathy, and prosocial behavior, while rigid or inconsistent parenting is associated with emotional dysregulation, low self-confidence, and difficulties in peer interaction. These findings are consistently reinforced across studies, suggesting that family environment operates as a foundational system in shaping early socio-emotional trajectories. From a theoretical perspective, this pattern aligns with attachment theory, which emphasizes that early emotional bonds with caregivers form the basis for later interpersonal functioning. Thus, the quality of

parenting becomes a decisive factor in determining whether socio-emotional development progresses adaptively or encounters barriers.

In addition, parenting practices are not isolated from broader socio-economic and contextual pressures that influence caregiver behavior. Factors such as parental stress, limited knowledge of child development, and environmental constraints often reduce the capacity of parents to provide optimal emotional support and social stimulation. As a result, children may experience limited opportunities to learn adaptive emotional regulation strategies through modeling and interaction within the family setting. This condition increases the likelihood of insecure attachment patterns, which are associated with difficulties in managing emotions and interacting socially. Therefore, parenting must be understood as a contextually embedded process shaped by both internal family dynamics and external structural conditions.

Secure attachment between caregiver and child further emerges as a critical protective factor in socio-emotional development. Children with secure attachment relationships tend to demonstrate higher emotional resilience, better stress management, and more adaptive peer relationships compared to those with insecure attachment patterns. Insecure attachment, on the other hand, is associated with emotional withdrawal, heightened sensitivity to stress, and reduced ability to regulate negative emotions effectively. These findings highlight the long-term developmental significance of early relational security in shaping emotional and social competence. Consequently, strengthening attachment quality is essential in preventing socio-emotional barriers in early childhood.

The literature consistently positions parental care as the central determinant in early childhood socio-emotional development. Parenting style, emotional responsiveness, and attachment quality operate as interrelated dimensions that collectively shape children's emotional and social competencies. Therefore, intervention strategies should prioritize parenting education, family support programs, and strengthened collaboration between families and educational institutions. Such integrated approaches are necessary to ensure consistent emotional guidance across home and school environments, thereby promoting optimal socio-emotional development in early childhood.

Excessive Gadget Use as a Barrier to Early Childhood Socio-Emotional Development

The synthesis of literature indicates that excessive use of digital devices constitutes a significant barrier to early childhood socio-emotional development, particularly in relation to children's ability to build social interaction skills, regulate emotions, and develop empathy. Across the reviewed studies, gadget exposure is consistently associated with reduced opportunities for face-to-face interaction, which is considered essential for the development of early social competence. When children spend a substantial amount of time engaging with digital media, the frequency and quality of interpersonal communication with peers and caregivers tend to decline, thereby limiting experiential learning in real social contexts. This condition disrupts the natural developmental process in which children learn social norms, emotional expression, and behavioral regulation through direct interaction. As a result, socio-emotional competencies may develop in a fragmented and less adaptive manner.

Excessive gadget use is also closely linked to the weakening of emotional regulation skills in early childhood. The literature suggests that digital media often provides instant stimulation and gratification, which reduces children's tolerance for delay and frustration in real-life situations. Consequently, children may become more prone to emotional outbursts, impatience, and difficulty in managing negative emotions when faced with social demands that require negotiation or waiting. This pattern reflects a disruption in the development of self-regulation, which is a core component of socio-emotional competence during early childhood. In addition, limited engagement in cooperative play reduces opportunities for children to practice empathy, perspective-taking, and conflict resolution, all of which are essential for healthy social functioning.

From a developmental learning perspective, the reduction of direct social interaction due to gadget overuse limits the role of observational learning and social modeling in shaping children's behavior. Children in early childhood typically acquire social behaviors by observing adults and peers, imitating emotional responses, and receiving feedback from their environment. However, when digital interaction replaces real-world engagement, these learning mechanisms become less effective, resulting in weaker internalization of social rules and emotional understanding. Furthermore, prolonged screen exposure may contribute to social withdrawal tendencies, where children prefer solitary digital activities

over interactive play with peers. This shift in behavioral preference can gradually reduce social motivation and hinder the development of communication skills.

In addition, the literature highlights that insufficient parental supervision intensifies the negative impact of gadget use on socio-emotional development. When parents do not establish clear boundaries regarding screen time or content selection, children are more likely to develop dependency on digital devices as a primary source of entertainment and emotional regulation. This dependency reduces opportunities for meaningful family interaction, which is critical for developing emotional bonding and secure attachment. Over time, this condition may contribute to weakened parent-child communication and reduced emotional responsiveness within the family system. Such dynamics further exacerbate socio-emotional vulnerabilities in children, particularly in terms of emotional expression and interpersonal engagement.

The synthesis of findings indicates that excessive gadget use should not be viewed merely as a behavioral habit, but as a structural factor that reshapes children's socio-emotional development environment. The reduction of interpersonal interaction, weakened emotional regulation, and diminished social learning opportunities collectively contribute to developmental barriers in early childhood. Therefore, effective mitigation strategies require collaborative efforts between parents and educators, including structured screen time regulation, promotion of active social play, and provision of interactive learning environments. Such integrative approaches are essential to ensure that digital exposure does not compromise the development of essential socio-emotional competencies during early childhood.

Bullying and Negative Social Experiences as Risk Factors for Socio-Emotional Development

The synthesis of literature indicates that bullying and other negative social experiences constitute significant risk factors that disrupt early childhood socio-emotional development, particularly in relation to emotional stability, self-concept formation, and peer relationship quality. Across the reviewed studies, bullying is consistently identified as a form of social aggression that may include verbal, physical, or psychological harm, which directly affects children's emotional security in early educational settings. Exposure to such experiences at an early age interferes with the natural development of trust, safety perception, and willingness to engage in social interaction. As children are still in the process of forming foundational emotional regulation abilities, negative peer interactions can have a disproportionate impact on their psychological development. Consequently, socio-emotional barriers such as anxiety, withdrawal, and reduced confidence often emerge as immediate developmental consequences.

Bullying experiences are also strongly associated with disturbances in emotional regulation and behavioral adjustment. The literature suggests that children who are repeatedly exposed to negative peer treatment tend to develop heightened emotional sensitivity, fear responses, and difficulties in managing stress within social contexts. These emotional responses are often manifested in avoidance behaviors, reduced participation in group activities, and reluctance to engage in peer communication. From a developmental psychology perspective, such patterns indicate that early adverse social experiences can interfere with the acquisition of adaptive coping strategies. Moreover, children may internalize negative self-perceptions as a result of repeated victimization, which further weakens their social confidence and emotional resilience.

In addition, negative social experiences such as bullying reduce children's opportunities to develop prosocial behavior through positive peer interaction. Early childhood development relies heavily on peer-based learning, where children acquire skills such as cooperation, sharing, negotiation, and empathy through repeated social engagement. However, when interactions are dominated by fear, rejection, or aggression, these learning opportunities are significantly reduced. Instead of developing constructive social skills, children may adopt defensive or avoidant behaviors as coping mechanisms. This condition may further isolate children from their peer groups, thereby reinforcing a cycle of social withdrawal and emotional insecurity.

The literature also highlights that the impact of bullying is intensified when children lack adequate emotional support from family and educators. Without supportive intervention, negative experiences in school environments may extend beyond immediate emotional reactions and develop into long-term socio-emotional difficulties. Children who do not receive validation or emotional reassurance may struggle to process their experiences constructively, leading to prolonged emotional

distress. In this context, the absence of protective adult relationships can exacerbate feelings of helplessness and reduce children's ability to recover from negative social encounters. Therefore, emotional support systems play a critical role in mitigating the adverse effects of bullying.

Overall, the synthesis indicates that bullying and negative social experiences represent critical threats to early childhood socio-emotional development that require immediate attention within both educational and familial contexts. The evidence consistently shows that such experiences undermine emotional security, disrupt social learning processes, and hinder the development of adaptive interpersonal skills. Therefore, preventive measures such as fostering inclusive classroom environments, strengthening teacher supervision, and promoting empathy-based learning are essential. Collaborative efforts between schools and families are necessary to ensure that children experience emotionally safe environments that support healthy socio-emotional development during early childhood.

The Role of Teachers and School Environment in Supporting Socio-Emotional Development

The synthesis of literature indicates that teachers and school environments play a crucial role in supporting early childhood socio-emotional development, particularly as a secondary but highly influential system after the family. Across the reviewed studies, teachers are consistently positioned not only as academic instructors but also as emotional facilitators who guide children in understanding, expressing, and regulating their emotions within structured social settings. The school environment provides children with their first systematic exposure to peer interaction beyond the family context, where they learn essential skills such as cooperation, sharing, turn-taking, and conflict resolution. These experiences are fundamental in shaping children's socio-emotional competence because they allow continuous practice of interpersonal skills in a socially regulated environment. Therefore, the quality of teacher interaction and classroom climate significantly determines the effectiveness of socio-emotional development in early childhood.

Teacher involvement is strongly associated with the development of emotional regulation and social confidence among young children. The literature highlights that teachers who apply responsive, supportive, and emotionally sensitive approaches are more likely to foster secure emotional environments that encourage children to express themselves without fear. In such environments, children tend to demonstrate increased participation in group activities, improved communication skills, and greater willingness to engage in peer collaboration. Conversely, classrooms characterized by limited emotional support or rigid instructional approaches may hinder children's social engagement and reduce their motivation to interact with peers. This suggests that teacher behavior functions as a modeling mechanism through which children learn appropriate emotional and social responses in daily interactions.

In addition, structured school environments provide critical opportunities for socio-emotional learning through guided activities and peer interaction. The literature indicates that learning activities designed to promote collaboration, storytelling, role-playing, and group problem-solving are particularly effective in enhancing children's empathy and social awareness. These activities allow children to experience real-time emotional negotiation and develop strategies for managing interpersonal conflicts. From a social learning perspective, repeated exposure to cooperative tasks enables children to internalize prosocial behaviors through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. As a result, school-based experiences become essential in compensating for socio-emotional deficits that may originate from less supportive home environments.

The effectiveness of teacher intervention is also closely linked to the broader emotional safety of the school environment. Studies consistently emphasize that emotionally safe classrooms reduce the likelihood of anxiety, social withdrawal, and behavioral difficulties among children. When children feel accepted and valued by teachers and peers, they are more likely to explore social relationships and develop confidence in their abilities. In contrast, environments that lack emotional safety or fail to address negative behaviors such as bullying can undermine children's socio-emotional growth. Therefore, the establishment of positive classroom climate is a critical factor in ensuring optimal developmental outcomes.

Overall, the synthesis of findings confirms that teachers and school environments function as essential protective systems in early childhood socio-emotional development. Their role extends beyond instruction to include emotional guidance, behavioral modeling, and the facilitation of meaningful peer

interactions. Effective teacher strategies, combined with supportive and inclusive school climates, can significantly enhance children's emotional regulation and social competence. Consequently, strengthening teacher capacity and improving school environments should be prioritized as key interventions to support healthy socio-emotional development during early childhood.

Emotional Regulation as a Core Barrier in Early Childhood Socio-Emotional Development

The synthesis of literature indicates that emotional regulation represents a core determinant in early childhood socio-emotional development, where its deficiency becomes one of the most persistent barriers affecting children's social adaptation and behavioral stability. Across the reviewed studies, emotional regulation is consistently defined as the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotional responses in accordance with environmental demands. In early childhood, this ability is still in the developmental phase, making children highly dependent on external support from caregivers and educators. When this developmental process is not adequately supported, children tend to exhibit difficulties in controlling impulses, expressing emotions appropriately, and responding adaptively to social situations. As a result, emotional dysregulation becomes a central mechanism underlying various socio-emotional problems.

The literature shows that poor emotional regulation is closely associated with a range of maladaptive behaviors, including aggression, withdrawal, and difficulty in maintaining peer relationships. Children who struggle to regulate emotions often respond to frustration with outbursts or avoidance, which negatively affects their ability to participate in group activities and cooperative learning. These behavioral patterns are not only situational but may become habitual if not addressed early, thereby reinforcing socio-emotional barriers over time. In addition, emotional dysregulation limits children's capacity for empathy and perspective-taking, both of which are essential for healthy social interaction. This indicates that emotional regulation functions as a foundational skill that influences multiple dimensions of socio-emotional competence.

From a developmental perspective, emotional regulation is strongly shaped by early interactions within the family and school environments. The literature emphasizes that children learn regulation strategies primarily through observation, imitation, and guided practice provided by adults. When caregivers model calm and constructive emotional responses, children are more likely to internalize adaptive coping mechanisms. Conversely, exposure to inconsistent, harsh, or emotionally unresponsive environments may hinder the development of effective regulation strategies. Over time, this may lead to increased vulnerability to stress and reduced ability to adapt to new social contexts.

Furthermore, emotional regulation is also influenced by external stressors such as bullying, excessive gadget use, and limited opportunities for social interaction. These factors reduce children's chances to practice emotional control in real-life situations, thereby weakening the development of self-regulatory skills. Without sufficient practice and reinforcement, children may struggle to manage frustration, delay gratification, and resolve conflicts constructively. This condition highlights the interconnected nature of emotional regulation with other socio-emotional barriers identified in the literature. Therefore, emotional regulation should not be viewed as an isolated skill, but as an integrative construct influenced by multiple environmental systems.

Overall, the synthesis confirms that emotional regulation functions as a central axis in early childhood socio-emotional development, where its deficiency amplifies the impact of other developmental barriers. The evidence consistently shows that children with weak emotional regulation skills are more susceptible to social difficulties, behavioral problems, and reduced interpersonal competence. Therefore, strengthening emotional regulation through consistent support from family, school, and social environments is essential. Integrated interventions such as responsive parenting, socio-emotional learning in classrooms, and structured social interaction opportunities are necessary to ensure optimal emotional and social development during early childhood.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the systematic literature review, it can be concluded that issues and barriers in early childhood socio-emotional development are influenced by a wide range of interrelated factors, encompassing both internal and external dimensions. The synthesis of studies consistently shows that the most common barriers include low emotional regulation ability, difficulties in peer interaction, lack of self-confidence, social withdrawal behavior, social anxiety, aggressive behavior, as

well as limited capacity for cooperation and empathy. These conditions reflect that socio-emotional development challenges are not isolated phenomena but emerge from complex interactions between the child and their surrounding environment. The identified causal factors include inappropriate parenting styles, limited opportunities for social interaction, negative peer experiences such as bullying, excessive use of digital devices, unsupportive environments, and insufficient early socio-emotional stimulation. This evidence highlights that socio-emotional development is strongly shaped by the quality of interactions experienced by children within family, school, and broader social contexts.

Furthermore, this study emphasizes that socio-emotional development is a fundamental aspect of early childhood that significantly influences children's ability to adapt to their environment, build social relationships, regulate emotions, and engage effectively in learning processes. The implications of these findings underscore the critical roles of parents, teachers, and the surrounding environment in providing consistent emotional support, guidance, and stimulation for children. A collaborative approach between family and educational institutions is therefore essential in creating a safe, supportive, and responsive environment that accommodates children's emotional needs. Through such collaboration, socio-emotional barriers can be minimized, enabling children to develop optimally across emotional, social, and behavioral domains.

In addition, it is recommended that parents and early childhood educators pay greater attention to children's socio-emotional development by providing appropriate stimulation, strengthening emotional regulation skills, and fostering warm and supportive environments that encourage positive social interaction. Educational institutions should also design learning programs that balance academic achievement with socio-emotional development, conduct regular developmental assessments, and strengthen partnerships with parents in supporting children's growth. For future research, further in-depth studies are needed to explore key determinants of socio-emotional development, particularly emotional regulation, parenting practices, digital exposure, and social environment influences, as well as to develop effective intervention models or programs that can address socio-emotional barriers in early childhood more comprehensively.

REFERENCES

- A'yun, R. Q., Rahmahdiani, N., & AM, M. A. (2024). Faktor-Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Perkembangan Keterampilan Sosial Anak: Systematic Literature Riview. *Montessori Jurnal Pendidikan Kristen Anak Usia Dini*, 5(2), 31-41. <https://doi.org/10.51667/mjpkaud.v5i2.1926>
- Aghnaita, A., & Irmawati, I. (2022). Bahaya perkembangan sosial emosional anak usia dini. *Pesona Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 9(1), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.24036/112470>
- Amalia, R., Mulawarman, M., Mulyani, P. K., Hayati, I. R., & Sa'idah, A. Y. N. (2023). Kajian perkembangan sosial emosional anak usia dini (Systematic Literature Review). *Aulad: Journal on Early Childhood*, 6(3), 454-461. <https://doi.org/10.31004/aulad.v6i3.565>
- Daisiu, K. F., & Yunitasari, S. E. (2025). Pola Asuh Orang Tua terhadap Sosial Emosional Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus dengan Gangguan Pemusatan Perhatian (ADHD) dan Hiperaktif. *Jurnal Inovasi, Evaluasi dan Pengembangan Pembelajaran (JIEPP)*, 5(1), 97-104. <https://doi.org/10.54371/jiepp.v5i1.645>
- Defaza, A., & Vitaloka, W. (2025). Rahasia Keberhasilan Sosial Emosional Anak: Keluarga Sebagai Faktor Kunci. *Generasi Emas: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 8(1), 111-123. [https://doi.org/10.25299/ge.2025.vol8\(1\).21209](https://doi.org/10.25299/ge.2025.vol8(1).21209)
- Fuadia, N. N. (2022). Perkembangan sosial emosi pada anak usia dini. *Wawasan: Jurnal Kediklatan Balai Diklat Keagamaan Jakarta*, 3(1), 31-47. <https://doi.org/10.53800/wawasan.v3i1.131>
- Gunara, G. (2026). Penerapan Metode Bermain Peran dalam Mengembangkan Kemampuan Sosial Anak Usia Dini. *J-PIAUD: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 2(1). <https://ejournal.stitlakbok.ac.id/index.php/bimbi/article/view/49>
- Gustiana, E., & Sari, A. K. P. (2022). Keterlibatan orang tua dalam bidang pendidikan terhadap perilaku sosial emosional anak usia dini. *Jurnal Pelita PAUD*, 7(1), 199-204. <https://doi.org/10.33222/pelitapaud.v7i1.2180>
- Hande, M. G., Djoehaeni, H., & Gustiana, A. D. (2026). Strategi Kolaborasi Guru-Orang Tua melalui Gerak dan Lagu untuk Regulasi Emosi Anak Usia 2-3 Tahun. *PAUDIA*, 247-258. <https://doi.org/10.26877/paudia.v15i2.3257>

- Hanifah, S., & Kurniati, E. (2024). Peran guru pendidikan anak usia dini dalam mengelola emosi anak usia dini: peran guru pendidikan anak usia dini dalam mengelola emosi anak usia dini. *Ceria (cerdas energik responsif inovatif adaptif)*, 7(1), 26-33. <https://journal.ikipsiliwangi.ac.id/ceria/article/view/21676>
- Karim, A., Utoyo, S., & Laiya, S. W. (2024). Strategi guru dalam mengatasi perilaku agresif anak usia dini di TK Negeri Kihadjar Dewantoro 1. *Student Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 4(1), 108-119. <https://doi.org/10.37411/sjece.v4i1.2055>
- Kusumawardani, C. T., & Rukiyati, R. (2023). Pengaruh Pemanfaatan E-Learning Terhadap Capaian Perkembangan Sosial Anak di Taman Kanak-Kanak Kota Yogyakarta. *PAUDIA: Jurnal Penelitian dalam Bidang Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 12(2), 270-278. <https://doi.org/10.26877/paudia.v12i2.15719>
- Lesmi, K. (2022). Peran Pola Asuh Orang Tua Yang Bekerja Pada Perkembangan Sosial Emosional Anak Usia Dini. *JP3M: Jurnal Pendidikan, Pembelajaran dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*, 4(1), 296-304. <https://doi.org/10.37577/jp3m.v4i1.404>
- Nada, S. F. I. Q., Vitaloka, D., Hotimah, H., Arifah, R. A., Sari, N. D. K., & Saripudin, A. (2024). Asesmen anecdotal record: Analisis dan implementasi pada perkembangan sosial emosional anak usia dini. *Al-Abyadh*, 7(2), 97-108. <https://ojs.diniyah.ac.id/index.php/Al-Abyadh/article/view/1347>
- Nasution, F. N., Syahrin, N. H. A., Hasibuan, N. F., Tanjung, Z. F. U., & Al-Hadid, N. H. (2023). Peran bimbingan konseling dalam perkembangan sosial-emosional anak. *ANTHOR: Education and Learning Journal*, 2(5), 668-675. <https://doi.org/10.31004/anthor.v1i5.212>
- Noviana, T., Puruhitasari, I., & Nurohmah, M. N. (2026). Hambatan Kemampuan Sosial Emosional Anak Usia 2 Tahun dalam Melakukan Interaksi dengan Lingkungan Sekitar. *Al-Irsyad: Journal of Education Science*, 5(1), 526-535. <https://doi.org/10.58917/aijes.v5i1.639>
- Nurhasanah, R. A. (2024). Peran Guru Dalam Menangani Rasa Malu Anak Usia Dini Melalui Permainan Lompat Tali (Studi Kasus Pada Anak Kelompok B di TK Muslimat NU 46). *AL IHSAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 5(2), 073-080. <https://doi.org/10.69552/alihsan.v5i2.2259>
- Prihati, A. S. (2025). Pengaruh Lingkungan terhadap Kecerdasan Sosial Emosional Anak Usia Dini di Desa Sumberbendo. *Pedagogy: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, 12(2), 41-49. <https://e-journal.upm.ac.id/index.php/pedagogy/article/view/163>
- Purwadi, H., & Fitriyani, L. (2023). Hubungan Durasi Penggunaan Gadget terhadap Personal Sosial pada Anak Usia 1-6 Tahun di Kota Depok. *MAHESA: Malahayati Health Student Journal*, 3(9), 2682-2690. <https://doi.org/10.33024/mahesa.v3i9.10907>
- Rahiem, M. D. (2023). Orang Tua dan Regulasi Emosi Anak Usia Dini. *Aulad: Journal on Early Childhood*, 6(1), 40-50. <https://doi.org/10.31004/aulad.v6i1.441>
- Rahmah, F., Elan, E., & Sianturi, R. (2025). Strategi Guru Terhadap Hambatan Perkembangan Sosial Anak Usia Dini. *Jurnal Caksana: Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 8(1), 410-417. <https://doi.org/10.31326/jcpaud.v8i1.2268>
- Rufiati, A. (2024). Pengaruh secure attachment antara ayah dan anak terhadap kecerdasan emosional pada anak usia 4-5 tahun. *Lentera Anak*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.34001/jla.v5i1.7589>
- Salsabela, E., Khumaeroh, S., & Widjayatri, R. D. (2022). Perkembangan sosial emosional anak pra sekolah dengan instrumen kuesioner masalah mental emosional. *Abata: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 2(2), 191-198. <https://doi.org/10.32665/abata.v2i2.555>
- Shofa, A., Achdiani, Y., & Arlianty, L. S. Dampak Pola Asuh Otoriter Dan Konflik Emosional Anak Pada Perilaku Bullying. *Global: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin*, 2 (2), 81-85. <https://doi.org/10.37985/global.v2i2.61>

- Widyawati, W., Husna, A. I. N., & Supendi, D. (2023). Parenting pola asuh orang tua untuk meningkatkan perkembangan emosional anak usia dini. *Pengabdian Masyarakat Sumber Daya Unggul*, 1(1), 35-41. <https://doi.org/10.37985/pmsdu.v1i1.30>
- Yani, S., Hasanah, S. S. M. A., Aeni, A. G. N., Rumapea, A. A., & Septian, K. (2023). Dampak bullying terhadap perkembangan sosial emosional anak usia dini. *Jurnal Citra Pendidikan*, 3(3), 1178-1185. <https://doi.org/10.38048/jcp.v3i3.2054>
- Zoyadila, L., Ramadhani, S., & Samudra, C. C. (2026). Konseling Individual dalam Pengembangan Emosi Anak Usia Dini. *Al-Aulad: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 1(1), 65-79. <https://www.ojs.staira.ac.id/index.php/al-aulad/article/view/840>