



# Making Learning Fun to Educate Early Childhood Spiritual Intelligence

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## Abstract

The developmental aspect of spiritual intelligence is important and the most fundamental among other intelligences, as it contributes to the formation of a character with integrity, empathy and morality. The importance of developing spiritual intelligence begins at an early age, which can help children understand the values of life. This study aims to improve the spiritual intelligence of early childhood (5-6 years) through role play. This type of research is classroom action research carried out in 2 cycles of 3 meetings each cycle with research subjects totaling fifteen children consisting of six boys and nine girls. Data is collected through observation by observing and recording the symptoms that appear on the object under study and documentation is obtained through archives and documents from early childhood education institutions. The research process was carried out starting from the planning stage, action implementation, observation, and reflection. The results showed an increase in early childhood spiritual intelligence through role-playing, where in the first aspect it has reached a high level of spiritual intelligence, namely 14 people with a percentage of 93.3% in the category of developing as expected. For the second aspect, 13 children were able to behave honestly, politely, and respectfully to friends and teachers with a percentage of 86.6% in the category of developing as expected, and for the third aspect, children have self-confidence through role play obtained by 14 people with a percentage of 93.3%. The results revealed that role play is an important alternative to improve spiritual intelligence for early childhood and the results of this study can be used as initial data for subsequent researchers in studying this problem in different contexts and issues.

## Article Information:

Received September 8, 2024

Revised October 20, 2024

Accepted November 18, 2024

**Keywords:** *Spiritual intelligence, role play, early childhood*

## How to cite:

Zulfa, M. Y., Tun, W. E. P., Arpa, D., Silalahi, M. F., Yudelnilastia, Y., Rahmanita, R., & Fillaili, K. Making Learning Fun to Educate Early Childhood Spiritual Intelligence. *International Journal of Islamic Studies Higher Education*, 3(3), 215-227. <https://doi.org/10.24036/insight.v4i1.188>

## E-ISSN:

2964-1861

## Published by:

Islamic Studies and Development Center Universitas Negeri Padang

## INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a group of children who are in a unique growth and development process, because a child is a gift from God (Farida, 2016; Santrock, 2012; Ulfa & Na'imah, 2020). Every child deserves love and education, especially Islamic education. Islamic education is an integralistic education because this system trains students' feelings in such a way that in their life attitudes, actions, decisions and approaches to all kinds of knowledge are influenced by spiritual values and are very aware of Islamic ethical values (Arsyad et al., 2020; Fikri, 2017; Latifah, 2016; Ritonga, 2017).

Early childhood is also characterized by various important periods that are fundamental in the child's life until the final period of development. One of the characteristics of early childhood is the golden age (Engkizar et al., 2021; Prasetiawan, 2019). Several concepts and facts found provide an explanation that in the golden period of early childhood, all the potential of children develops very quickly (Ariyanti, 2016; Kurniasih, 2019). Early childhood is a child who is in the age range of 0-6 years and has a special pattern of growth and development in accordance with the level of growth and development. The organization of education for early childhood must be in accordance with the level of development, some are fast and some are slow (Nityanasari, 2020; Nurasyiah & Atikah, 2023).

Early childhood education basically focuses on actions provided by parents and teachers in providing education of love and affection and building a positive environmental aura in providing educational stimuli to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that children have readiness to enter further education, so that children can explore and gain experience to know many things they want to know by seeing, imitating and trying directly (Intan et al., 2023). Thus, early childhood education is very necessary to be developed so that human resources become more qualified. In addition, the purpose of the educational process is so that students can actively develop the strengths or potentials within themselves (Rahayuningsih, 2022). However, the meaning of education is not merely sending children to school but is broader than that (Hanim & Yuriadi, 2019). A child will grow and develop well when he/she receives a complete education so that one day he/she will become a useful human being for the community, country and religion. Such children are healthy children, physically, mentally, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually (Mukarromah, 2024).

Learning for early childhood is basically a communication process between teachers and children, both direct and indirect communication using media (D'Amico et al., 2021; Fricke et al., 2023; Jaworski et al., 2018). The learning process can also be done anywhere, anytime and under any conditions. Especially in learning activities related to aspects of developing early childhood spiritual intelligence. As stated by Febrianti, (2021), that spiritual intelligence is the most basic center among other intelligences, because it is the source of guidance for other intelligences. Therefore, it can be concluded that efforts to develop a whole human being cannot be separated from developing the potential of spiritual intelligence.

As with other potential intelligences, spiritual intelligence should begin to be developed from an early age (Salehudin & Asiyani, 2022). In the golden period of human development, certain stimuli and conditioning carried out on children will make an impression and have a long-term impact on their life span. The development of spiritual intelligence in early childhood should not be too difficult, considering that children are still pure and sensitive beings. Their relationship with the creator is corrected by the lack of concern of the adults around them for the existence of this relationship. Children

slowly grow up losing their identity as spiritual beings connected to the universe and their creator. Nonetheless, there is a common view that spiritual intelligence is essential for the survival of humanity.

Spiritual intelligence is defined as the intelligence to face and solve problems of meaning and value, namely the intelligence to place human behavior and life in a broader and richer context of meaning, the intelligence to judge that one's actions and way of life are more meaningful than those of others, and also to give meaning to the worship of every behavior and activity, through tawhid steps and thinking and principled only to Allah SWT (Aridhona, 2017; Oemar & Okto Fani, 2018).

Developing this spiritual intelligence requires religious and spiritual cultivation that must be instilled from an early age, because by being equipped with religion and spirituality from an early age, children will not be easily influenced by negative things that can damage their future (Sofiyah, 2019). Spiritual guidance and development in early childhood begins when entering preschool, where this spiritual education is developed by educating children in relating to God, self-development, relating to others and relating to nature. Every child has potential that must be developed so that they have direction and purpose in determining their life path, therefore the development of spiritual intelligence is needed (Permadi et al., 2020; Qoni'ah, 2019; Syahnaz et al., 2023).

One of the activities that can improve the spiritual intelligence of early childhood is role play. Role play or what is called pretend play is a form of active play where children go through behaviors that are clearly related to the material and situation as if it were actually happening. role play method is one of the learning methods carried out by dramatizing a behavior in relation to social problems (Maghfiroh et al., 2020; Ramadhan et al., 2022; Yusuf, 2019). According to this opinion, it can be explained that in this role-playing learning technique, children can act out or dramatize social problems, especially in the form of behavior.

Role-playing is an activity of imitating the actions of other people around them. Through role-playing, children's habits and preferences for imitation are channeled, and they can develop their imagination and appreciation of the material. The goal is to train and elaborate skills needed as an adult, for example, play serves as a means of practicing skills for survival, this can be observed in kittens running and catching their prey.

Play is very important for early childhood to stimulate their development. Role playing is a learning process for children because playing while learning can increase knowledge and also make children happier. Learning through the role-playing method is a teaching and learning process by involving students to play the characters described in accordance with the existing theme. By playing a role, children are expected to appreciate a work through the depiction of the characters in the literary work, such as the story in the activity book "*Anak yang shaleh dan shaleha di sayang Allah atau melalui cerita-kisah nabi*". When playing a role, children play a character and must follow the scenario in the story read by the teacher, besides that children will get emotional and aesthetic experiences, so that they can show the development of children's spiritual intelligence (Engkizar et al., 2024).

The results of initial observations show that children's spiritual intelligence has not developed optimally, where children i) lack order when performing religious worship such as performing prayer movements and praying before or after activities, ii) children lack good behavior in listening and paying attention when friends or teachers speak, lack of polite language, rarely say thank you and lack patience in waiting for their turn, and do not throw garbage in its place and do not tidy up equipment after use, iii) children lack confidence in learning activities such as performing in front of the class and

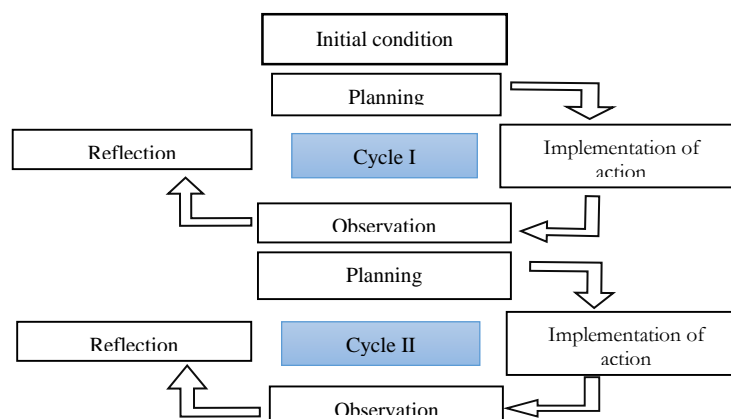


improve early childhood spiritual intelligence. However, the researchers above only focus on the role of parents in improving early childhood spiritual intelligence, honing early childhood spiritual intelligence through Islamic religious guidance, prayer activities, homeschooling, and also discuss strategies to improve spiritual intelligence by providing stimuli such as through stories and letter card media. While research that discusses specifically about early childhood spiritual intelligence that is improved through role-playing has not been found (Putri et al., 2021; Rahmi et al., 2021; Veradegita et al., 2021). The fundamental difference between this research issue and previous research is that previous researchers discussed ways or stimuli with methods and strategies that are commonly applied in schools such as through stories and letter cards, while this research issue discusses early childhood spiritual intelligence that is enhanced through role playing because early childhood tends to like to play so they don't feel bored.

## METHODS

This study used a type of class action research. Classroom action research can be defined as a process of studying learning problems in the classroom through self-reflection in an effort to solve problems by taking various planned actions in real situations and analyzing any effects of the treatment (Nurahman & Pribadi, 2022; Syaifudin, 2021). The research subjects in this article are early childhood aged 5-6 years, totaling fifteen children consisting of six boys and nine girls. Data collection techniques include observation by observing and recording the symptoms that appear on the object under study which is focused on the spiritual intelligence of early childhood. Furthermore, the next data collection technique is documentation, namely by collecting documents and data that are treated in research problems, then examined intensely so that they can support and increase the trust and proof of an event, in this case the documentation is obtained through documents and archives from the Early Childhood Education Institution unit (Alsokari et al., 2024; Meesuk et al., 2020; Putra et al., 2022).

Data analysis by processing and interpreting data to obtain meaningful information and in accordance with the research objectives (Rifa'i, 2023). Data analysis is carried out by qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis in order to see how much the increase in spiritual intelligence of early childhood with role play is carried out. The success indicator of this study is if it has reached the minimum completeness that has been set, namely 75%. The research was carried out in 2 cycles and 3 meetings per cycle with stages starting from planning, implementing actions, observing and reflecting on each cycle. In accordance with the stages of class action research as follows:



**Fig 1. Stages of Classroom Action Research**



**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the research findings, the results of observing the initial conditions of early childhood spiritual intelligence are summarized in tabular form as follows:

**Table 1. Results of Child Observation in Initial Conditions (Pre-Action)**

Aspects observed	Assessment					
	Not yet developed		Starting to develop		Developing as expected	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
The child is able to carry out religious worship (reading prayers)	5	33,3	6	40	4	26,6
Children are able to behave honestly, politely and respectfully fellow friends and teachers	7	46,6	5	33,3	3	20
Children have self-confidence through role play.	4	26,6	6	40	5	33,3

The results of initial observations can be seen that early childhood spiritual intelligence has not developed as expected. This can be seen in the first aspect of children being able to carry out worship reading prayers before and after eating, out of 15 children for the undeveloped category (ND) as many as 5 people with a percentage of 33.3%, for the category starting to develop (SD) as many as 6 people with a percentage of 40%, and for the category developing as expected (DE) as many as 4 people with a percentage of 26.6%. In the second aspect, children are able to behave honestly, politely and respectfully to fellow friends and teachers, out of 15 children for the undeveloped category (ND) as many as 7 people with a percentage of 46.6%, for the category starting to develop (SD) as many as 5 people with a percentage of 33.3%, for the category developing as expected (DE) as many as 3 people with a percentage of 20%. In the third aspect, children have self-confidence through role play, out of 15 children for the underdeveloped category (ND) as many as 4 people with a percentage of 26.6%, for the category starting to develop (SD) as many as 6 people with a percentage of 40%, for the category developing as expected (DE) as many as 5 people with a percentage of 33.3%.

**Cycle I**

The implementation of Cycle I was carried out three times a meeting by involving all children as a whole and children following the role-playing activities designed by the teacher. The recapitulation results of the first meeting, second meeting and third meeting are as follows:

**Table 2. Recapitulation of Observation Results in cycle I Meeting 1-3**

Aspects observed	Cycle I																	
	Meeting I						Meeting II						Meeting III					
	ND		SD		DE		ND		SD		DE		ND		SD		DE	
f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Children are able to carry out religious worship (reading prayers)	4	40	6	40	5	33,3	2	13,3	7	46,6	6	40	0	0	6	40	9	60
Children are able to behave honestly, politely and respectfully with friends and teachers.	5	33,3	4	26,2	6	40	3	20	6	40	6	40	1	6,66	7	46,6	7	46,6
Children have self-confidence through role play	3	20	4	26,6	8	53,2	2	13,3	3	20	10	66,6	0	0	4	26,6	11	73,3

The results of observations and comparisons of initial conditions with the implementation of cycle I show an increase in percentages in the three aspects observed. This can be seen in the first aspect, at the first meeting there were 5 people with a percentage of 33.3% developing as expected (DE) assessment criteria, increased in the second meeting by 6 people with a percentage of 46.6%, and increased even more in the third meeting by 9 people with a percentage of 60%. In the second aspect, at the first meeting the assessment criteria developed as expected (DE) as many as 6 people with a percentage of 40%, the same as the second meeting of 6 people with a percentage of 40%, and increased in the third meeting as many as 7 people with a percentage of 46.6%. In the third aspect, at the first meeting there were criteria for assessing developing as expected (DE) as many as 8 people with a percentage of 53.2%, increased in the second meeting by 10 people with a percentage of 66.6%, and increased even more in the third meeting by 11 people with a percentage of 73.3%. To optimize the increase in children's spiritual intelligence in accordance with the expected target, it is continued with the implementation of cycle II.

### Cycle II

The implementation of cycle II was also carried out for 3 meetings. The recapitulation results of the first meeting, second meeting and third meeting are as follows:

**Table 3. Recapitulation of Observation Results in cycle II Meeting 1-3**

Aspects observed	Cycle I																	
	Meeting I						Meeting II						Meeting III					
	ND		SD		DE		ND		SD		DE		ND		SD		DE	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Children are able to carry out religious worship (reading prayers)	0	0	4	26,6	11	73,3	0	0	2	13,3	13	86,6	0	0	1	6,66	14	93,3
Children are able to behave honestly, politely and respectfully with friends and teachers.	0	0	6	40	9	60	0	0	4	26,6	11	73,3	0	0	2	13,3	13	86,6
Children have self-confidence through role play	0	0	3	20	12	80	0	0	2	13,3	13	86,6	0	0	1	6,66	14	93,3

In cycle II, the spiritual intelligence of early childhood through role playing has increased, this can be seen in the first aspect, at the first meeting there were 11 people with a percentage of 73.3%, increased in the second meeting by 13 people with a percentage of 86.6%, and increased even more in the third meeting by 14 people with a percentage of 93.3%. In the second aspect, at the first meeting the assessment criteria developed as expected (DE) as many as 9 people with a percentage of 60%, increased at the second meeting by 11 people with a percentage of 73.3%, and increased further at the third meeting by 13 people with a percentage of 86.6%. In the third aspect, at the first meeting there were assessment criteria for developing as expected (DE) as many as 12 people with a percentage of 80%, increasing in the second meeting as many as 13 people with a percentage of 86.6%, and further increasing in the third meeting as many as 14 people with a percentage of 93.3%. Based on the second cycle, it can be understood that the results have met the success indicators so that the research is sufficient and stopped until cycle II.

Research findings in the initial conditions, the problems obtained include the following: children's spiritual intelligence is still not developed, lack of active participation in the learning process, limited time and resources needed to develop early childhood spiritual intelligence. This can be seen from the number of children who are not actively involved in the teaching and learning process, and children tend to be passive during learning. Based on these initial conditions, there is a need for action in improving spiritual intelligence in early childhood.

Spiritual intelligence is the ability to feel one's religiousness. Spiritual intelligence is only obtained by feeling religious, not just knowing a religion. Spiritual intelligence is also defined as the ability to feel the presence of God on his side, or feel that he is always seen by Allah SWT.

Spiritual intelligence is considered as one of a person's initial capital towards life success. It is explained by [Asril, \(2021\)](#); [Efendi et al., \(2019\)](#) that spiritual intelligence will be able to mobilize other intelligences individually or simultaneously in a person. A person with spiritual intelligence will realize that every action he does is not solely for his own interests, but rather focuses on the interests of many people on the basis of equality as fellow creatures of God. The description is known that if someone wants to understand the purpose of his life well, he must have spiritual intelligence.

School as one of the educational institutions, has an important role in developing the various intelligences that children have. Children in early childhood, namely ages 0-6 years, are the golden age, if at that time the child is given the right stimulation, it will be an important asset for the child's development in the future. Early childhood education at least carries out all the potential intelligence of children, planting basic values, and developing basic abilities, one of which is spiritual intelligence ([Elkhaira et al., 2020](#); [Engkizar et al., \(2023\)](#)).

Increasing the spiritual intelligence of early childhood can be done with role-playing activities in a close interval, so that role-playing activities can be carried out with the planned time. In the initial conditions, children were less confident in participating in the game, so guidance and direction were needed. Cycle I was conducted for 3 meetings. In cycle I, role-playing activities were carried out by inviting children to read prayers before and after eating, modeling honest, polite and respectful behavior for friends and teachers together. The results obtained in the initial conditions with the provisions of developing as expected have not met the expected Minimum Completion Criteria, so the research was continued in cycle II.

Cycle II was conducted for 3 meetings. In cycle II the author changed the way of role-playing activities, where here the author was also involved in role-playing, the author told the children one by one to practice the prayer before and after eating, gave direct examples of how to say honestly, polite attitude between friends and teachers and did not forget the author gave rewards and lively applause so that other children were also motivated.

Role-playing activities can increase the spiritual intelligence of early childhood. This is in accordance with Renew's opinion in Nuryanto that methods that can be applied in improving spiritual intelligence in children can be done through fun games and an encouraging learning atmosphere and how children are interested in learning ([Nuryanto, 2017](#)).



Research conducted in improving the spiritual intelligence of early childhood through role play, there are several obstacles found, namely: i) Children like to scramble to appear in front of the class practicing reading prayers before and after eating and practicing how to be polite, respect each other between friends and teachers, ii) The enthusiasm of children is too enthusiastic so that the author is overwhelmed by the ongoing learning process. iii) The lack of time allocation needed in role-playing activities in improving the spiritual intelligence of early childhood.

Based on the description above, the author can conclude that these obstacles arise because children aged 5-6 years still behave according to their wishes and children cannot yet understand the situation around them, both the state of their playmates and the state of their environment. Children need explanations from others to understand the environment around them. In line with the opinion explained by Sudirman that children have egocentric characteristics, meaning that early childhood generally only understands things from their own point of view, not from the point of view of others. As well as the characteristics of early childhood that have so much curiosity, so that when they see something new they see it makes children very enthusiastic to try it themselves. Therefore, the role of the teacher is very important in helping early childhood development.

## CONCLUSION

This study has successfully revealed that role-playing can improve the spiritual intelligence of early childhood. There is a significant increase starting from the initial conditions of the problems obtained, which in the initial conditions of early childhood spiritual intelligence is still not developed, but when this research is carried out in 2 cycles and 3 meetings in each cycle, the results are obtained that increase and meet the success indicators. Behind the success of this research, there are obstacles faced by the author when conducting research including: 1) Children like to scramble to come to the front of the class to practice reading prayers before and after eating and practicing how to be polite, respectful between friends and teachers, 2) The enthusiasm of children is too enthusiastic so that the author is overwhelmed by the ongoing learning process, and 3) the lack of time allocation needed in role-playing activities to improve the spiritual intelligence of early childhood. Besides the successes and obstacles faced by the author, at least this research can be used as a foundation and reference for subsequent researchers to examine this problem in different contexts and issues.

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International Journal of Islamic Studies Higher Education

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