

DOI 10.18372/2786-5495.1.18872

Abdülkadir Kabadayi 

Ph.D. (Pedagogical Sciences), Prof. Dr.,

Faculty of Education,

Necmettin Erbakan University,

Konya, Turkey

[akkabadayi03@gmail.com](mailto:akkabadayi03@gmail.com)

## TINY HEARTS, BIG LESSONS: UNDERSTANDING THE FACTORS SHAPING VALUES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

***Annotation.** The acquisition of values at an early age is influenced by a myriad of factors that shape children's moral development and ethical reasoning. Family dynamics, cultural influences, social interactions, and individual characteristics all play significant roles in shaping children's understanding of right and wrong, empathy, and social responsibility. Positive role modeling, open communication, cultural awareness, and moral education are key components in fostering values acquisition during the formative years. Understanding the complex interplay of these factors is essential for promoting positive character development and moral education in young children. The aim of this article is to put forward the factors that affect the acquisition of the values at an early year.*

**Key words:** values, early years, factors, value education, acquisition of values.

***Анотація.** На засвоєння цінностей у ранньому віці впливає безліч факторів, які формують моральний розвиток дітей та етичні міркування. Сімейна динаміка, культурні впливи, соціальні взаємодії та індивідуальні особливості відіграють важливу роль у формуванні у дітей розуміння добра й зла, емпатії та соціальної відповідальності. Позитивне рольове моделювання, відкрите спілкування, культурна обізнаність і моральне виховання є ключовими компонентами сприяння набуттю цінностей у роки формування. Розуміння*

*складної взаємодії цих факторів має важливе значення для сприяння розвитку позитивного характеру та морального виховання маленьких дітей. Метою цієї статті є висунення факторів, які впливають на придбання цінностей у ранньому віці.*

***Ключові слова:** цінності, ранній вік, фактори, ціннісне виховання, набуття цінностей.*

**Introduction.** The acquisition of values at an early age is a critical component of childhood development, shaping the moral compass and ethical framework of individuals as they navigate the complexities of the world around them. From family dynamics and cultural influences to social interactions and educational experiences, numerous factors contribute to the formation and internalization of values during the formative years of childhood. Understanding the intricate interplay of these factors is essential for parents, educators, and policymakers seeking to promote positive character development and moral reasoning in young children.

The acquisition of values begins in the earliest stages of life, as children observe, internalize, and emulate the behaviors and beliefs modeled by their caregivers and immediate surroundings. Family dynamics, including parental attitudes, values, and disciplinary practices, exert a profound influence on children's moral development, serving as primary sources of socialization and moral guidance.

Beyond the family unit, social interactions with peers, teachers, and community members play a significant role in shaping children's values and moral reasoning.

However, the acquisition of values at an early age is not solely determined by external influences; individual characteristics and developmental factors also play a crucial role in shaping children's moral development. As children mature and develop a greater capacity for abstract thinking and perspective-taking, their understanding of values becomes increasingly complex and nuanced.

**The aim of this article is to** explore the multifaceted nature of factors influencing the acquisition of values at an early age, drawing on insights from

psychology, sociology, education, and child development. By examining the dynamic interplay of family dynamics, cultural influences, social interactions, and individual characteristics, we gain a deeper understanding of how values are internalized and integrated into the moral identity of young children..

### **Values education at early age.**

Early childhood, which is expressed as the period between the ages of 0-6 by some [21] and by others as the period until the compulsory school age is reached, is a period in which the physical development of the child is very rapid, the cognitive, emotional and social development varies from day to day, and personality formation is significantly affected. It is a critical period that is known to affect the situation[1]. However, early childhood is an important developmental process that is also emphasized in terms of character and moral development and has a strong impact on the acquisition of values that the individual will carry throughout his life [13]. In this process, spending most of the time in the family environment and under the influence of parents requires investigating the influence of family and parents on the acquisition of values.

### **Family environment and parental influence on the acquisition of values.**

Families serve as primary socialization agents, transmitting cultural norms, beliefs, and values to children through direct teaching, modeling behaviors, and establishing expectations for conduct. Therefore, studies investigating the influence of family and parents on moral development and acquisition of values are mostly conducted on adolescent samples and are mostly focused on perceived parenting style [23], parental responsibilities [5], parental socialization [2; 6; 14], parenting styles [3; 7; 10; 17] and parent-child relationship [4;15 16; 22].

### **Factors affecting the acquisition of values in the family.**

In this section, in addition to parenting style, discipline techniques and parent-child communication, some other factors that affect the acquisition of values in the family will be listed as follows: the child's developmental status, the child's gender, the parent's gender, the child's attachment style, culture and socioeconomic status.

### **The role of Parental Guidance and Role Modeling.**

Parental attitudes, behaviors, and disciplinary practices serve as influential models for children, shaping their moral development and ethical decision-making processes. Baumrind identified four types of parental styles. These are: authoritarian parent, democratic parent, neglectful parent and permissive parent [10].

Many researchers argue that a democratic parental attitude that includes compassion along with limits and rules is more effective in children's moral development and value acquisition [6]. It is widely believed that the children of parents with democratic attitudes can internalize and adopt values, while the life practices of neglectful and authoritarian parents and the values education they provide will not have a serious meaning in the child's life [1]. In addition, in a study examining the effect of parenting style on the development of moral values in children [7], it was concluded that the most effective parental style in the development of moral values at an early age is authoritarian parenting.

As a result, although it is an obvious fact that parenting styles have an important role in the transfer of values, it should not be expected that any parenting style, will be absolutely correct in children's acquisition of values [17]. It is insufficient to explain children's acquisition of values and moral standards based on specific parental styles.

### **The role of developmental status of the child.**

Individual characteristics, personal traits, temperament, cognitive development, and moral reasoning abilities influence individuals' capacity to internalize values, exercise moral judgment, and navigate ethical dilemmas [20].

### **The role of educational experiences of children.**

Schools, religious institutions, and community organizations play significant roles in promoting values education, character development, and moral reasoning through formal and informal curricula, extracurricular activities, and peer interactions.

### **The role of parents' gender.**

Some studies have concluded that especially the mother's communication with the child and her conversation with the child about moral values affect the child's acquisition of values and are more effective than fathers in his moral development [3; 8; 11; 12]. The fact that the mother has a great influence on the child's acquisition of values can be explained simply by cultural differences, and can also be associated with the mother's acceptance and control behaviors on the child [4; 17].

#### **The role of culture and socioeconomic status of children.**

Cultural values, religious beliefs, societal norms, and historical contexts shape individuals' understanding of right and wrong, influencing their moral perspectives and ethical decision-making [17].

#### **The role of historical and environmental contexts.**

Historical events, environmental factors, and contextual realities influence values acquisition by shaping individuals' perceptions of identity, community, and their relationship to the broader world. Children and young people are more influenced by the religious and moral values of the parents they want to be like [9].

#### **The role of media and technology.**

Mass media, digital platforms, and online communities influence values formation by disseminating cultural narratives, promoting certain ideologies, and shaping perceptions of social norms and behaviors.

#### **The role of social interactions.**

Peer relationships, community networks, and social environments provide opportunities for individuals to observe, internalize, and negotiate values within social contexts, shaping their sense of identity and belonging.

**Conclusions and Recommendations.** In conclusion, the acquisition of values at an early age is a multifaceted process influenced by various factors that encompass family, culture, social interactions, and individual characteristics. Recognizing the importance of nurturing environments, positive role modeling, and open communication, adults can play a pivotal role in shaping children's moral development and ethical reasoning. By fostering cultural awareness, promoting

empathy, and providing opportunities for moral education, we can empower children to navigate ethical dilemmas, uphold positive values, and contribute to a more compassionate and inclusive society. Understanding and addressing the complex interplay of factors affecting the acquisition of values at an early age is essential for fostering the growth of morally responsible individuals who embody integrity, empathy, and respect for others. Through collective efforts and shared commitment, we can create environments that support the ethical development of children and lay the groundwork for a brighter and more just future.

By implementing the recommendations below, adults can create nurturing and supportive environments that facilitate the acquisition of values at an early age, laying the foundation for children to become compassionate, ethical, and responsible individuals in society.

*Promote Positive Role Modeling:* Adults, including parents, caregivers, educators, and community leaders, should model positive values and behaviors in their interactions with children. Children learn by example, so demonstrating kindness, honesty, empathy, and respect in everyday actions and decisions is essential for shaping their moral development.

*Encourage Open Communication:* Create opportunities for open and honest communication with children about values, ethics, and moral dilemmas. Engage in age-appropriate discussions about right and wrong, fairness, and empathy, encouraging children to express their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives on moral issues.

*Provide Opportunities for Moral Education:* Integrate moral education and character development into early childhood curricula, school programs, and community activities. Incorporate storytelling, role-playing, and cooperative learning experiences that promote values such as honesty, integrity, responsibility, and compassion.

*Promote Empathy and Perspective-Taking:* Cultivate empathy and perspective-taking skills in children by encouraging them to consider the thoughts, feelings, and needs of others.

*Set Clear Expectations and Boundaries:* Establish clear expectations and boundaries for behavior that reflect core values and ethical principles.

*Encourage Critical Thinking and Ethical Decision-Making:* Teach children to think critically and make ethical decisions by providing opportunities for moral reasoning and problem-solving. Encourage children to consider the consequences of their actions, weigh conflicting values and perspectives, and make choices that align with their principles and beliefs.

*Engage Families and Communities:* Foster partnerships between families, schools, and community organizations to support children's moral development.

## References

1. Akto, A., ve Akto, S. (2020). Erken çocukluk ve değerler eğitimi. *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 13(74), 326-339.
2. Carlo, G., Fabes, R. A., Laible, D. ve Kupanoff, K. (1999). Early Adolescence and Prosocial/Moral Behavior II: The Role of Social and Contextual Influences. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*. 19(2), 133-147.
3. Cesur, S. ve Özkan Küyel, N. (2009). Ebeveyn Tutumları ve Gençleri Ahlaki Muhakeme ve Ahlaki Yönelimleri Arasındaki İlişkiler. *Psikoloji Çalışmaları*, 29, 65-91.
4. Friedlmeier, M. ve Trommsdorff, G. (2011). Are mother–child similarities in value orientations related to mothers’ parenting? A comparative study of American and Romanian mothers and their adolescent children. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*. 8(6), 661-680.
5. Gillies, V. (2008). Perspectives on Parenting Responsibility: Contextualizing Values and Practices. *Journal of Law and Society*, 35(1), 95-112.

6. Grusec, J. E. (2002). Parental Socialization and Children's Acquisition of Values . İçinde M. H. Bornstein (Ed.), *Handbook of Parenting Volume 5 Practical Issues in Parenting* (2. bs, C. 5). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
7. Jeti, L. (2018). The Influence of Parenting Style Toward Child's Moral Values Development. *Atlantis Press*, 136-141.
8. Kavun, Y. (2016). *Ergenlerde dindarlık ve insani değerler* [Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi].
9. Kılavuz, M. A. (2005). Anne Baba Örnek Davranışlarının Çocukların ve Ergenlerin Dinî Kişiliğinin Oluşumuna Etkileri. *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 14(2), 41-58.
10. Lee, S. M., Daniels, M. H. ve Kissinger, D. B. (2006). Parental Influences on Adolescent Adjustment: Parenting Styles Versus Parenting Practices. *The Family Journal*, 14(3), 253-259.
11. Neslitürk, S. ve Deniz, M. E. (2014). Anne Değerler Eğitimi Programının 5-6 Yaş Çocuklarının Sosyal Beceri Düzeylerine Etkisi. İçinde *Pegem Eğitim ve Öğretim Dergisi* (C. 4, Sayı 4, ss. 103-116). Pegem Akademi Yayıncılık.
12. Neslitürk, S., Özkal, N. ve Dal, S. (2015). 5-6 Yaş Çocuklarının Değer Kazanım Süreçlerine Anne Değerler Eğitimi Programının Etkisi. *Mersin Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 11(3), 883-899.
13. Oruç, C. (2010). Okul Öncesi Dönem Çocuğunda Ahlaki Değerler Eğitimi. *Eğitim ve İnsani Bilimler Dergisi*, 1(2), 37-60.
14. Pratt, M. W., Hunsberger, B., Pancer, S. M. ve Alisat, S. (2003). A Longitudinal Analysis of Personal Values Socialization: Correlates of a Moral Self-Ideal in Late Adolescence. *Social Development*, 12(4), 563-585.
15. Recchia, H. E., Wainryb, C., Bourne, S. ve Pasupathi, M. (2014). The construction of moral agency in mother-child conversations about helping and hurting across childhood and adolescence. *Developmental Psychology*, 50(1), 34-44.
16. Roest, A. M. C., Dubas, J. S. ve Gerris, J. R. M. (2009). Value Transmissions Between Fathers, Mothers, and Adolescent and Emerging Adult



Children: The Role of the Family Climate. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 23(2), 146-155.

17. Rudy, D. ve Grusec, J. E. (2001). Correlates of Authoritarian Parenting in Individualist and Collectivist Cultures and Implications for Understanding the Transmission of Values. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 32(2), 202-212.

18. Santrock, J. W. (2012). *Ergenlik* (D. M. Siyez, Ed.; çev.). Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.

19. Santrock, J. W. (2019). *Yaşam Boyu Gelişim* (G. Yüksel, Ed.; 13. bs). Nobel Akademik.

20. Serinsu, M. E. ve Doğan, R. (2020). Sosyal Öğrenme Kuramı Çerçevesinde 2-6 Yaş Dönemi Çocuklar İçin Ailede Değer Eğitimi İlkeleri. *Dini Araştırmalar*, 23(58 (Din Eğitimi: Prof. Dr. Beyza Bilgin Özel Sayısı)), 151-170.

21. Tatlılıoğlu, K. (2015). Erken çocukluk döneminde ailede çocuğa kazandırılan değerlerin çocuğun kişilik gelişimine etkisi. *Bingöl Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 5(9), 283-292.

22. Ulusoy, K. (2021). *Karakter, Değerler ve Ahlak Eğitim* (2. bs). Pegem Akademi .

23. Williams, K. E. ve Ciarrochi, J. (2020). Perceived Parenting Styles and Values Development: A Longitudinal Study of Adolescents and Emerging Adults. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 30(2), 541-558.