


Prevention of Violent Behavior in Early Childhood Through Legal Protection in the Community Environment

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: violent behavior, legal protection, early childhood</p>	<p>Violence against early childhood is not only limited to physical acts such as hitting, slapping, or directly hurting, but also includes verbal, emotional, sexual violence, and neglect of children's rights. This study aims to provide information and insight regarding legal protection against violence against early childhood. This study uses library research by analyzing journals, books and the Constitution to analyze problems related to violence against early childhood. The results of this study indicate that there are several documents on legal protection for children such as constitution No. 35 of 2003 concerning Child Protection, constitution No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Law No. 23 of 2004 concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence, the Criminal Code and the Law Concerning Criminal Violence against Children. Although normatively legal protection for early childhood is quite adequate, its implementation still faces many obstacles. Synergy is needed between law enforcement officers, child protection agencies, the community, and the government to create a safe and child-friendly environment.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a vulnerable individual whose growth and development still require close attention from adults and their surrounding environment. Violence against early childhood is a serious matter and requires attention from the community and government. Violence against children is a serious problem that encompasses various forms of behavior that can harm children physically and mentally. Forms of physical violence such as murder, assault, and sexual harassment often receive attention because of their visible impacts. Violent behavior against early childhood is a violation of human rights and negatively impacts children's psychological and social development.

Violence against children is not limited to physical violence, but also includes non-physical violence that is often hidden but no less damaging. Economic violence, for example, involves the exploitation of children in the form of forced labor for the benefit of others, thus hindering their right to grow and develop properly. Meanwhile, psychological violence includes actions such as insults, threats, or treatment that demeans a child's self-esteem, which can cause deep emotional trauma. In the legal context in Indonesia, children have the right to receive protection from violence as stipulated in Constitution Number 23 of 2002

which was updated by Constitution Number 35 of 2014. However, cases of violence against children still frequently occur in various regions, indicating gaps in the implementation of regulated legal protections.

Based on a report from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA, 2023), cases of violence against children in Indonesia continue to increase every year, with most perpetrators coming from the closest environment, such as family and school. From an early age, children need supervision, attention, and especially protection. The constitutions and regulations governing child protection are stated in (Constitution Number 35 of 2014 concerning Amendments to Constitution Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection, 2014). Articles regulating the protection of children from becoming victims of sexual violence are regulated in Article 9 paragraph 2, Article 15, Article 20, Article 54, Article 59, Article 69, and Article 76 C - E. Meanwhile, the forms of violence are categorized as follows: physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, and social violence (Noviana, 2015). Although it has been regulated in laws and regulations as a form of legal protection to prevent children from sexual violence, many people are still unaware of it.

Violence against early childhood is often hidden and difficult to detect. This is due to several factors, such as the child's dependence on the perpetrator, the child's inability to express what happened, and the perception that society still considers violence a legitimate form of child discipline. Furthermore, young children lack the ability to recognize and protect themselves from physically and psychologically harmful actions. In school settings, violence against children often occurs in the form of bullying, physical violence by teachers or peers, and sexual harassment. According to a report by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI, 2023), approximately 42% of children in Indonesia have experienced bullying at school. This violence negatively impacts children's psychological development, reduces academic achievement, and increases the risk of mental disorders such as depression and anxiety (Nurlitasari, 2021).

The Indonesian government has enacted various regulations to protect children from violence, such as Constitution Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, which affirms children's right to protection from violence, exploitation, and discrimination. Furthermore, Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 82 of 2015 concerning the Prevention and Response to Acts of Violence in Educational Institutions also regulates measures to prevent and address violence in schools. However, the implementation of these policies still faces challenges, particularly in terms of law enforcement and public awareness (Harahap & Setiawan, 2022).

The factors causing violence against early childhood are complex and interrelated. These include stress levels in parenting, parental ignorance about appropriate parenting styles, economic pressure, low levels of education, and a deeply rooted culture of violence within society. Individuals and families play a key role in providing a sense of security to children and maximizing their role as parents. The societal role can be achieved through assistance from communities or community groups, such as schools, by teaching children to recognize, reject, and report potential threats of violence. The state's role is to provide and

implement applicable laws in the event of sexual violence against children, as a way of guaranteeing a sense of security and protection for children (Noviana, 2015).

Schools, as part of society, need to take a more significant role in preventing sexual violence against children. Understanding the forms of sexual violence that children can experience from an early age will prevent them from becoming victims of violence. Therefore, educators and parents of early childhood children need knowledge and understanding of the forms of sexual violence and the actions that can be taken if they encounter them as part of a holistic and integrated prevention effort. Several risk factors contributing to the high rate of violence against early childhood include stress in parenting, low parental education, poverty, a social environment that is permissive of violence, and lack of access to mental health and child protection services. Furthermore, weak law enforcement against perpetrators of child violence and the uneven implementation of child protection policies present challenges in preventing and addressing cases of child violence.

By analyzing a growing number of cases and field data (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021), as well as interviews with legal experts and practitioners in the field of child protection, this research is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of child protection. Furthermore, this article also seeks to present practical steps that can be taken to strengthen the legal and operational framework for protecting children from violence and exploitation.

METHOD

Literature study research (library research) is a research method that uses literature as a data source to answer research questions or to develop a theoretical basis (Zed, 2008). This involves an in-depth review of various literature sources, such as books, journals, articles, and previous research results relevant to the research topic. Literature review in scientific research is an important part of the overall research method steps. Literature research utilizes secondary data sources to obtain research data so that it can limit activities only to library collection materials without requiring field research (Sari, 2020). The first research stage is problem identification, namely examining legal protection against violent behavior in early childhood in the community. Next, data is collected from secondary sources, such as books and relevant journal articles. Researchers compile and analyze the data using supporting theories. Then, the results of the analysis are formulated to answer the research objective, namely to provide insight.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Violence against Early Childhood

Violence is all forms of verbal non-verbal behavior carried out by a person against another person, causing negative physical and psychological effects on the person who is the target (Erfaniah Zuhriah, in Susanto, 2006). Violence is an action carried out by a person or a number of people who are in a strong position (or who are feeling strong) against a person or a number of people who are in a weaker position (or are seen to be in a weaker state), using

their strength - whether physical or non-physical - which is superior with the intention of causing suffering to the party who is the object of violence. (Mufidah in Susanto, 2006).

Meanwhile, the definition of violence against children is (child abuse) is all forms of physical or emotional painful treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, commercial exploitation or other exploitation, which results in real or potential injury/harm to the child's health, survival, development, or dignity, which is carried out in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power. (Faqih in Daisy Widiastuti and Rini Sekartini, 2005).

Theoretically, child abuse is defined as physical, mental, or sexual treatment generally carried out by people who have responsibility for the welfare of children, all of which are indicated by harm and threats to the health and well-being of children. The most obvious example of violence experienced by children is repeated beatings or physical attacks until wounds or scratches occur. However, it is important to realize that child abuse is not only in the form of beatings or physical attacks, but also in the form of various exploitations through pornography and sexual assault, giving children inappropriate food or malnutrition, neglect of education and health related to medical matters (Bagong Suyanto and Sri Sanituti, 2002).

So, it can be concluded that violence against early childhood is any form of action or treatment that hurts, harms, or neglects children between the ages of 0 and 6 years, whether done intentionally or unintentionally, which has a negative impact on the child's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive growth and development. This violence can occur in the family, school, or community environment, and is carried out by anyone, including parents, caregivers, teachers, peers, or other adults.

Violence against early childhood is not only limited to physical acts such as hitting, slapping, or direct injury, but also includes verbal, emotional, and sexual violence, as well as neglect of children's rights. Actions such as shouting, insulting, threatening, scaring, mocking, and not providing proper affection and attention are also forms of violence that can damage a child's psychological development (Karoma, 2024). During early childhood, children are highly vulnerable to violence because they are not yet able to defend themselves or express what they are experiencing. The consequences of violence during this period can be profound and long-lasting, including mental disorders, deviant behavior, and damage to brain and nervous system function (Eddyono, 2016). Therefore, understanding and addressing violence against early childhood is crucial in ensuring healthy and optimal growth and development, as well as creating a strong and empowered generation.

Forms of Violence and Their Impact on Early Childhood

The causes of violence vary widely, and the types vary as well. One form of domestic violence is violence perpetrated by parents, family members, and those around them against their children. Violence against children violates human rights because, as human beings, children are creatures of God Almighty who have basic rights from birth, so no human being or other party may deprive them of these rights (Yulianto, 2020). Violence against early childhood can manifest in various forms, including physical, emotional, verbal, and sexual. The following are some of the most common forms of violence against early childhood and their impact on children:

Table 1. Forms of Violence and Their Impacts

No.	Forms of Violence	Example	Impact on Children
1.	Physical Violence	Hitting, pinching, kicking, pulling hair, burning, shaking the baby	Physical injury, trauma, developmental delays, becoming aggressive or fearful
2.	Emotional Abuse	Membentak, menghina, mengabaikan, memperlakukan, mengancam secara emosional	Yelling, insulting, ignoring, humiliating, emotionally threatening
3.	Verbal Violence	Insulting (“stupid, naughty”), comparing, condemning	Impaired self-confidence, difficulty socializing, becoming withdrawn or aggressive
4.	Sexual Violence	Groping, exposing genitals, forcing children to watch pornography	Severe trauma, sexual behavior disorders, anxiety, depression, suicide risk
5.	Neglect	Not fed, not cared for when sick, lack of supervision	Malnutrition, speech and thinking delays, social disorders, risk of external violence

Violence in early childhood is not just about physical injuries. Emotional wounds, loss of affection, and feelings of insecurity can linger for a lifetime. The impact of violence in early childhood is very serious and can be long-lasting. During this period, children are at a critical stage of brain, emotional, and social development. Therefore, violence, whether physical, emotional, sexual, or neglect, can leave deep scars and impact a child's life into adulthood.

Legal Perspectives as a Way to Prevent Violence Against Early Childhood

The legal perspective on early childhood is crucial in the context of protection, growth, and development, and the fulfillment of their rights. In various countries, including Indonesia, early childhood receives special legal attention because they are in a critical period of growth and development. According to Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System: Early childhood is defined as children from birth to 6 (six) years of age. Furthermore, according to Constitution No. 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection (an amendment to Law No. 23 of 2002): A child is a person under 18 years of age, including unborn children.

Legal protection for early childhood is crucial because they are a vulnerable group unable to defend their own rights. The state and society have a responsibility to ensure that early childhood (0–6 years) grows in a safe, healthy, and loving environment. Legal protection for early childhood encompasses physical, psychological, educational, and social aspects. The Constitution is tasked with preventing violence, punishing perpetrators, and ensuring optimal child growth and development. Although legal protection for early childhood is generally adequate, its implementation still faces numerous obstacles. Synergy between law

enforcement officials, child protection agencies, the community, and the government is needed to create a safe and child-friendly environment.

Early childhood requires special protection because they are vulnerable to exploitation, violence, and neglect. Children also lack the ability to defend themselves and are highly dependent on their environment (family, community, and state). Therefore, the state is responsible for providing early childhood education facilities, providing legal protection against domestic violence, and preventing child trafficking, sexual exploitation, and other forms of violence. Parents are primarily responsible for fulfilling children's rights. The state has a role in providing support through regulations, education programs, health care, and social security (Putri, 2021).

The following are several forms of legal protection for early childhood, both under Indonesian national law and international law:

1. Constitution Number 35 of 2014 (Amendment to Constitution Number. 23 of 2002) concerning Child Protection

This law is the primary basis for child protection in Indonesia. Its contents include:

- a. Chapter 1 Paragraph (2): A child is a person under 18 years of age, including unborn children.
 - b. Chapter 13: Children have the right to protection from physical, psychological, and sexual violence, exploitation, and neglect.
 - c. Chapter 59: The state is obliged to provide special protection to early childhood, including the provision of early childhood education services, nutrition, and health care.
2. Constitution Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System
 - a. State the importance of early childhood education as the foundation for lifelong education.
 - b. The state supports the provision of affordable and early childhood education high-quality.
 3. Constitution Number 23 of 2004 concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence
 - a. Protecting children from domestic violence.
 - b. Children who are victims or witnesses of domestic violence also receive legal protection.
 4. Criminal Code and Constitutions Related to Criminal Violence Against Children
 - a. Perpetrators of violence against children can be charged with criminal offenses (abuse, molestation, neglect, etc.).
 - b. There are specific sanctions for perpetrators of violence against children, especially if the perpetrator is a parent or caregiver.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which has been ratified by Indonesia through Presidential Decree No. 36 of 1990, states (1) children have the right to the best protection and services, (2) the best interests of the child must be the primary consideration in all actions related to children (Wahyudi, 2020). In relation to the fulfillment of children's rights, various supporting laws and regulations have been made, namely: Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 1979 which regulates Child Welfare, Constitution of the

Republic of Indonesia Number 3 of 1997 which regulates Juvenile Courts, Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights (specifically in articles 52 to 66 which regulate children's rights).

Every child has the right to receive protection when needed, but must also be given greater opportunities to participate in matters related to the responsibilities of older people regarding their lives. Article 52 of the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 39 of 1999 states in paragraph: 1) Every child has the right to protection by parents, family, society and the State. 2) Children's rights are human rights and for their benefit the child's rights are recognized and protected by law even from the womb. And Article 53 of the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 39 of 1999 in paragraph: 1) Every child from the womb has the right to live, maintain life, and improve his life, 2) Every child from birth has the right to a name and citizenship status.

There are several institutions that play a role in providing protection, namely: the Indonesian Child Protection Commission, the Witness and Victim Protection Agency, the Integrated Service Center for the Protection of Women and Children, the Child Protection Unit at the National Police and the Prosecutor's Office (Sari, 2023). Examples or forms of real protection for children are the provision of free birth certificates, integrated health service post and early childhood education programs to support child growth and development, reporting cases of child violence through hotlines or applications, handling child victims of violence psychologically, medically, and legally.

CONCLUSION

Violence against early childhood is not limited to physical acts such as hitting, slapping, or direct injury, but also includes verbal, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect of children's rights. Actions such as yelling, insulting, threatening, intimidating, teasing, and even withholding adequate love and attention are also forms of violence that can damage a child's psychological development. During early childhood, children are particularly vulnerable to violence because they are not yet able to defend themselves or express their experiences. Legal protection for early childhood is crucial because they are a vulnerable group unable to defend their own rights. The state and society have a responsibility to ensure that early childhood (0–6 years) grows up in a safe, healthy, and loving environment. Legal protection for early childhood encompasses physical, psychological, educational, and social aspects. The law is tasked with preventing violence, punishing perpetrators, and ensuring optimal child growth and development. Although legal protection for early childhood is generally adequate, its implementation still faces many obstacles. Synergy is needed between law enforcement officials, child protection agencies, the community, and the government to create a safe and child-friendly environment.

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