



Parenting Patterns of Blind Parents in Fostering the Independence of Visually Impaired Children

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Article Info

Article history:

Received: May 21st, 2025

Accepted: July 14th, 2025

Published: July 25th, 2025

Keywords:

Parenting Style; Blind Parents;
Independence; Visually
Impaired Children; Visual
Disability

Abstract

This study aims to examine the parenting patterns applied by blind parents in fostering the independence of their visually impaired children. Using a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study method, data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation involving three blind parents and their children. The results show that blind parents implement a democratic parenting style, using strategies based on verbal communication, daily routines, and gradual life skills training. Despite physical limitations and environmental barriers, the parents were still able to foster their children's independence in areas such as personal hygiene, mobility, and simple decision-making. Social support from spouses, extended family, and educational institutions further reinforced the effectiveness of the parenting strategies used. This study highlights that disability does not hinder parenting capacity, and emphasizes the importance of collaboration between family and the surrounding environment to optimally support the development of children with visual impairments.

To cite this article: Wijaya, D. S., Maisuhetni, M., & Andayani, A. (2025). Parenting Patterns of Blind Parents in Fostering the Independence of Visually Impaired Children. *Ensiklopedia: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Inovasi Pembelajaran Saburai*, 5(01), 141-147. <https://doi.org/10.24967/esp.v5i01.4260>

INTRODUCTION

Education and parenting within the family are fundamental aspects in shaping a child's personality and independence. The family is the first and foremost environment in a child's socialization process, especially for children with disabilities such as visual impairments. Visually impaired children require special attention, so they can develop optimally and achieve independence in their daily lives.

Education is essentially a deliberate and responsible activity carried out by adults toward children, facilitating interactions that enable children to achieve the maturity they aspire to. According to the Law of the Republic of

Indonesia on the National Education System No. 2 of 2013, the goal of national education is to educate the life of the nation and develop Indonesian citizens in a holistic manner, individuals who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, possess noble character, knowledge and skills, physical and spiritual health, strong and independent personalities, and a sense of social and national responsibility.

The family is the smallest social unit with a vital role in a child's development, which is physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Within the family, parents serve as the first and primary educators who shape the character and independence of their children. This role becomes increasingly complex when disability is present, whether in the child

or the parent. One type of disability that presents unique challenges in the parenting process is visual impairment.

Visual impairment refers to a condition in which an individual experiences either total blindness or partial vision loss (low vision). Visually impaired children require parenting strategies that differ from those for typically developing children, particularly in areas related to learning and life skills training. Independence, which is normally part of a child's natural developmental process, becomes a major challenge, one that requires the active and consistent role of parents in providing guidance, emotional support, and continuous practical training.

Despite facing various limitations, many blind parents demonstrate remarkable resilience in raising their children. They are able to create alternative parenting strategies that suit their physical conditions, such as providing detailed verbal instructions, involving children in household activities from an early age, and utilizing technological tools and social support networks. The experiences and parenting practices they adopt can serve as a source of knowledge and inspiration for other families in similar situations.

Independence in visually impaired children is not merely defined by the ability to eat or dress themselves, but encompasses broader aspects such as decision-making skills, self-confidence, independent mobility, and the ability to socialize with others. This process is greatly influenced by the parenting style applied from an early age. Independence for children with visual impairments means not only managing daily tasks on their own but also being able to make decisions, communicate with their surroundings, and develop their potential.

This development is deeply affected by how their parents raise them. Interestingly, when the parent is also visually impaired, the parenting challenges and dynamics become more complex. On one hand, they have a deep understanding of their child's condition due to shared experiences, but on the other hand, they also face limitations in providing optimal care.

Unfortunately, research on parenting by disabled parents, particularly blind parents raising blind children, remains limited in Indonesia. Yet, such studies are crucial as an evidence-based foundation for designing intervention programs, inclusive education policies, and more equitable and accessible social services.

The parenting style adopted by blind parents plays a strategic role in fostering self-confidence, social skills, and independence in visually impaired children. An adaptive and supportive parenting approach has a positive impact on a child's development, while authoritarian or permissive parenting styles may hinder the growth of independence. Therefore, it is important to examine how blind parents raise their visually impaired children and how this process contributes to the development of the child's independence.

This research is important due to the limited number of studies that explore the parenting patterns of parents with disabilities who raise children with similar disabilities, particularly those with visual impairments. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of educational science, developmental psychology, and guidance practices for families in similar conditions.

In this context, the pre-research field data is presented in the following table:

Table 1. Initial Field Research Data

No	Location / Study	Distribution Findings
1	Parent-Child Interaction Pattern	Blind parents interact verbally and emotionally, using voice, touch, and routine.
2	Parenting Style	Parents tend to combine authoritative and supportive approaches, though some show permissiveness depending on external support.
3	Independence Behavior of Visually Impaired Children	Some children can eat, organize belongings, and walk independently; others remain dependent on adults.
4	Environmental Support	Spouses, extended families, and blind communities help support parenting and the development of children's independence.
5	Parenting Challenges	Parents struggle to monitor visual activities, relying on trust, communication, and assistive tools.
6	Special Strategies Used by Blind Parents	Use of voice, fixed routines, and gradual training to introduce responsibility to the child.

Based on preliminary observations conducted at a community or foundation that supports families with blind parents, it was found that there are several blind families who also have children with visual impairments. In these families, parents continue to carry out their parenting roles despite their visual limitations.

Some of the children were observed to be quite independent in activities such as eating on their own, organizing personal belongings, and walking with the aid of a cane. However, there were also children who tended to be more dependent on their parents or other adults, showing less initiative in completing personal tasks.

Based on this background, the researcher considers it important to further explore how blind parents implement parenting strategies to foster independence in their visually impaired children. The findings of this study are expected to contribute meaningfully to the development of parenting theory and serve as a valuable reference for educational institutions, counselors, and families in supporting children with special needs.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at providing

an in-depth description and understanding of the parenting patterns applied by blind parents in fostering independence in their visually impaired children. This approach was chosen for its ability to reveal meaning, behaviors, and experiences of the subjects within real-life contexts, directly from their own perspectives.

The type of research used is a case study, focusing on the daily life situations and interactions between blind parents and their visually impaired children. The study was conducted in a natural setting, without variable manipulation, and is oriented toward gaining a comprehensive contextual understanding of the phenomenon.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using three primary techniques:

In-Depth Interviews

Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format with the main informants, namely blind parents. The purpose was to gather information regarding the parenting styles applied, caregiving strategies used, types of support provided, and the challenges they face in raising visually impaired children.

Direct Observation

Observations focused on the daily activities of visually impaired children and their interactions with their parents. This method aimed to understand the level of independence the children had achieved and how parents responded to real-life situations.

Documentation

Documentation included the collection of relevant data such as photos, daily notes, or other supporting documents, like reports on child development or activity records from institutions or foundations where the children receive support.

Research Subjects

The subjects of this study consisted of three blind parents, each of whom had one visually impaired child. The subjects were selected purposively based on data saturation. To support the validity of the data, the researcher also involved one additional informant, such as a support teacher or staff member from the foundation working with the child.

Data Validity

Data validity was ensured through triangulation, which included source

triangulation (parents and support staff), technique triangulation (interviews, observations, and documentation), and time triangulation (data collection conducted at different times to observe consistency in responses and behavior).

With this qualitative descriptive approach, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the parenting patterns of blind parents and their impact on the independence of visually impaired children within the context of real-life situations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that blind parents develop caregiving strategies based on verbal communication, touch, and structured daily routines. Visually impaired children who are consistently raised with a supportive approach demonstrate strong independence in areas such as personal hygiene, dressing, mobility, and basic decision-making. A democratic parenting style has proven effective in providing space for exploration and fostering self-confidence in visually impaired children, both of which are key factors in developing independence.

Table 2. Summary of Findings

No	Informant Code	Parenting Style Applied	Parenting Strategies	Challenges Faced	Observed Forms of Child Independence
1	Mother A	Democratic	Daily routines, verbal reinforcement, independent dressing training	Limited mobility outside the home	Child is able to eat, dress, and store personal belongings independently
2	Father B	Democratic-participative	Training the child to use sound orientation, motor skills exercises	Difficulty accessing public schools	Child can walk independently at home and wash hands by themselves
3	Mother C	Democratic, supportive	Emotional support, daily activity training	Limited access to assistive learning tools for the blind	Child can make simple decisions and study independently
4	Support Teacher	(Triangulation)	-	-	Assesses that the child shows positive progress

Based on the results of in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, several key findings were identified:

Parenting Style Applied

All three parents demonstrated a tendency to adopt a democratic parenting style, which involves giving children responsible freedom along with guidance and supervision. They taught their children to be independent in daily activities such as eating, dressing, and organizing personal belongings. This aligns with Baumrind (1991), who stated that a democratic parenting style fosters independence and a sense of responsibility in children.

Parenting Strategies

The main strategies included basic skill training through repetition, routine, and positive reinforcement. One parent, for instance, used voice and touch as tools to assist the child's mobility training at home. This is consistent with Allen and Cowdery (2015), who found that multisensory-based training is effective for children with sensory disabilities, including those who are visually impaired.

Challenges Faced

Parents encountered challenges related to mobility, limited access to public facilities, and the lack of inclusive learning media. However, these limitations did not reduce their commitment to educating their children. As stated by Turnbull et al. (2011), family support remains a crucial factor in the development of children with special needs, regardless of the parents' physical condition.

Role of Social Support

Information from support teachers confirmed that external support from

institutions or foundations plays a significant role in fostering the independence of visually impaired children. This supports the findings of Dunst et al. (2007), which suggest that parental social participation in educational environments enhances the effectiveness of parenting children with special needs.

Indicators of Child Independence

Observations revealed that children were able to carry out daily activities independently, such as washing hands, putting on shoes, and organizing personal items. This demonstrates the success of the parenting approach in cultivating essential life skills required for independence, as emphasized by Friend and Bursuck (2019), who asserted that foundational skills are critical in educating children with disabilities.

The findings of this study affirm that the parenting styles of blind parents can function effectively in fostering independence in visually impaired children, particularly through a democratic approach that is consistent and empathetic. These parents do not view their visual limitations as barriers to actively supporting their children's growth and development.

This finding is consistent with Baumrind's (1991) theory, which posits that a democratic parenting style encourages children to become independent and responsible. In the context of disability, such an approach becomes even more meaningful, as it takes into account the child's special needs within a supportive environment.

Moreover, the parents' own experience of being visually impaired adds value to their caregiving, allowing them to understand and respond to their children's needs in more sensitive and

realistic ways. This aligns with Goodley's (2017) view that lived experiences of disability can enhance empathy and resilience in parenting practices.

In addition, social support from educational institutions serves as a significant reinforcement. As explained by Bronfenbrenner (1979) in his ecological systems theory, the interaction between family and environment—including schools and communities, plays a critical role in shaping children's character and independence.

Therefore, this study not only illustrates the success of blind parents in raising independent children, but also highlights the importance of collaborative and network-based approaches in educating children with special needs.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The parenting style of blind parents plays a vital role in fostering independence in visually impaired children. A democratic, communicative, and consistent parenting approach can shape children who are independent physically, emotionally, socially, and academically. It is recommended that educational and social institutions provide support to blind parents through parenting training programs, improved access to information, and the facilitation of inclusive environments that strengthen the role of families in raising visually impaired children.

According to various experts, parenting style refers to the approach or method that parents use to guide, educate, and direct their children in daily life. Parenting style greatly influences the development of a child's personality, independence, as well as social and emotional abilities. Based on expert perspectives, parenting styles are generally classified into three main types: authoritarian, democratic, and permissive, each with its own characteristics and different impacts on the child.

Based on the findings of the study on the parenting patterns of blind parents in fostering independence in their visually impaired children, several recommendations can be proposed for relevant stakeholders. First, there is a need to enhance support for blind parents through specialized training programs focusing on multisensory parenting techniques, effective communication, and life skills training for fostering independence. Government institutions, schools, and social organizations are encouraged to provide programs that strengthen the parenting capacity of parents with visual impairments.

Second, it is essential to develop inclusive and blind-friendly learning tools and media, both for children and parents. These may include Braille books, audiobooks, indoor orientation aids, and descriptive audio guides to support children's independent learning. Third, schools and disability-focused foundations should strengthen collaboration with parents through consistent communication and sustainable psychosocial support programs.

Furthermore, the reinforcement of social networks and community engagement is recommended to provide blind parents with spaces for mutual support and knowledge sharing. Discussion forums or disability-focused parenting groups can serve as effective platforms for addressing various challenges in raising visually impaired children. In addition, educational institutions that train teachers and counselors for children with special needs should integrate the study of parenting by persons with disabilities into their curriculum, in order to produce more inclusive and adaptive educators.

Finally, it is recommended that further research be conducted with a broader scope, including a larger number of participants, varied social backgrounds,

and different types of disabilities. A quantitative approach may also be used to reinforce findings through statistical measurements linking parenting styles and the level of independence in children. Thus, the results of this study are expected to serve as a foundation for improved inclusive education policies and practices

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