Journal of Contemporary Indonesian Islam
ISSN: 3021-8640. Volume (5) Nomor (2), July – December 2026
Page : 179-194
DOI: https://doi.org/10.47766/jcii.v5i2.8374

The Importance of Parental Care for Children's Success in This World and the Hereafter: An Islamic Educational Perspective

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Article Information

Received:
2026-10-12

Accepted:
2026-10-16

Published:
2026-10-21

Keywords:
Parental Care, Islamic Education, Child Development, Family Responsibility, Worldly Success; Hereafter

Abstract

This article examines the importance of parental care in supporting children's success in worldly life and the hereafter from an Islamic educational perspective. It argues that parental responsibility extends beyond providing food, clothing, and formal schooling to include spiritual formation, moral modelling, emotional security, intellectual stimulation, social guidance, and cooperation with teachers and the wider community. The Qur'an presents the family as a site of moral responsibility (Qur'an 66:6) and portrays Luqman's counsel to his son as an integrated model of faith, worship, character, and social conduct (Qur'an 31:13–19). Prophetic traditions likewise emphasize responsibility for dependants and the enduring value of a righteous child who prays for a deceased parent. The article also draws on research concerning parental involvement, family processes, and child development. Using a qualitative library-based method, it synthesizes Islamic primary sources, classical Muslim scholarship, and selected contemporary educational literature. The analysis finds that effective parental care is consistent, affectionate, ethically sound, developmentally appropriate, and collaborative rather than coercive. It concludes that children's success should be understood holistically: competence and well-being in this world must be joined with faith, moral responsibility, service to others, and hope for salvation in the hereafter. The article recommends practical family routines, respectful

communication, digital guidance, equitable attention to children, and sustained home–school partnership.

INTRODUCTION

Children are among the most important trusts given to parents. Their development is shaped not only by school instruction or the material resources available to them but also by the daily atmosphere of the home: the way adults speak, resolve conflict, practice worship, respond to mistakes, and show concern for other people. Parental care therefore has a lasting influence on a child's emotional security, habits, moral understanding, and capacity to learn. In an Islamic worldview, this responsibility has both temporal and spiritual dimensions. Parents want their children to be happy now and to have faith, be responsible, and act rightly later.

The Qur'an provides a direct warning to believers to protect themselves and their families from the Fire (Qur'an 66:6). This verse is not a call to harshness or domination; rather, it establishes a serious duty of teaching, guidance, example, and moral care. The Qur'anic account of Luqman's advice to his son further shows that education involves belief in God, gratitude, prayer, moral courage, humility, and courteous conduct (Qur'an 31:13–19). These elements cannot be reduced to academic achievement or economic success alone.

In contemporary societies, parents face numerous pressures: long working hours, economic uncertainty, rapid technological change, peer influence, and competing expectations about education. Some families equate success only with high grades, prestigious employment, or wealth. Others focus on religious instruction but may overlook emotional health, critical thinking, practical competence, or the child's individual needs. A balanced approach should reject this false separation. Sound faith and character can support responsible participation in society, while worldly skills can be directed toward ethical and beneficial purposes.

This article addresses the question: why is parental care essential to children's success in this world and the hereafter, and what forms should such care take? It aims to explain the concept through Islamic sources, relate it to selected educational research, identify common challenges, and offer practical recommendations. The central argument is that responsible

parenting combines spiritual guidance, affection, discipline, education, protection, and partnership with other caregivers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Understanding Parental Care

a. Care as a comprehensive responsibility

Parental care is often understood as the provision of basic needs, including food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, and school expenses. These are indispensable, but care is broader. It includes attention to a child's safety, emotional life, learning, social relationships, religious understanding, and moral development. A child may receive excellent material provision and still feel neglected if adults rarely listen, offer affection, or show interest in the child's concerns. Conversely, affection without boundaries, supervision, or educational support may leave a child without the structure needed to flourish.

The Islamic concept of amanah (trust) offers a useful framework. Children are not possessions whose lives parents may control without limit; they are human beings for whom parents are accountable before God. This responsibility requires mercy, justice, wisdom, and attention to developmental differences. Parents should guide respectfully, correct gently, and protect while fostering growing independence.

b. The family as the first educational environment

Before children enter formal schooling, they learn through observation and participation in family life. They notice how parents treat elders, speak about neighbors, handle money, respond to frustration, and keep promises. Such repeated experiences become informal lessons. If parents teach honesty but regularly lie, the child receives conflicting messages. If they demand respect while using insults, the child may learn that power rather than mutual dignity defines relationships.

Bandura's social learning theory highlights the role of observation and

modeling in human behavior (Bandura, 1977). This insight complements the Islamic emphasis on uswah hasanah, or a positive example. Advice is important, but its credibility increases when the adult's conduct supports the message. Parents do not need to appear flawless; acknowledging mistakes and apologizing can itself model honesty and responsibility.

2. Islamic Foundations of Parental Responsibility

a. Protecting the family through guidance

Qur'an 66:6 instructs believers to protect themselves and their families from the Fire. Muslim exegetes commonly understand the verse to include teaching obedience to God, cultivating virtuous conduct, and preventing wrongdoing through appropriate guidance. Al-Tabari's commentary places the verse within the responsibility to instruct and discipline family members in accordance with religious duties (al-Tabari, 2001). Issuing commands alone does not satisfy the principle. Parents must make religious learning understandable, demonstrate its meaning in daily life, and create an environment where children can ask sincere questions.

Protection also includes guarding children against physical danger, exploitation, harmful relationships, and damaging online content. Religious and practical care should not be separated: a parent who teaches prayer but ignores bullying, unsafe internet use, or severe emotional distress has not fulfilled the whole range of caregiving responsibilities.

b. Luqman's counsel as a model of integrated education

In Qur'an 31:13–19, Luqman advises his son through a sequence of connected teachings. He begins by prohibiting the association of partners with God, then emphasizes the importance of gratitude toward parents, God's knowledge of even the smallest deeds, the necessity of prayer, the encouragement of what is right, the discouragement of wrong, and the values of patience,

humility, and moderation in both speech and movement. The passage offers a holistic educational model in which belief, worship, conscience, social responsibility, emotional discipline, and manners reinforce one another.

The form of Luqman's advice is also significant. He addresses his son with the affectionate expression "my dear son" (yā bunayya), which communicates closeness while delivering serious moral instruction. The passage therefore illustrates that clear guidance and tenderness are compatible. Parents should neither abandon moral standards in the name of affection nor withdraw affection in the name of discipline.

c. Parents as responsible shepherds

A widely transmitted Prophetic hadith states that each person is a shepherd and is responsible for those under their care (Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 893; Sahih Muslim, no. 1829, with numbering varying by edition). The hadith establishes accountability according to one's role. Parents are responsible for raising their children fairly and within their means. It includes providing, educating, supervising, and making decisions that reasonably serve the child's interests.

The hadith should not be interpreted as permission for arbitrary authority. Islamic ethical responsibility is constrained by justice, mercy, and the prohibition of harm. A parent's authority is a means of protecting and educating the child, not a justification for violence, degrading treatment, or favoritism.

d. The enduring value of a righteous child

In Sahih Muslim, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) teaches that when a human being dies, their deeds cease except for three categories, including a righteous child who prays for them (Sahih Muslim, no. 1631, according to a common numbering system). This hadith reveals a spiritual dimension of parenting that extends beyond the parent's lifetime. The goal is not merely to produce a child who succeeds socially but to nurture a person whose faith, character, and supplication become a continuing source of benefit.

The hadith does not mean that parents can guarantee a child's

righteousness or salvation. Every person has moral agency and is accountable for their choices. It does, however, encourage parents to invest in a legacy of faith, knowledge, compassion, and ethical conduct. Such investment is expressed through example and patient teaching rather than the pursuit of a public image of piety.

3. Dimensions of Children's Success

a. Spiritual and religious development

From an Islamic perspective, success in the hereafter is inseparable from faith, worship, repentance, and righteous action. Parents can support spiritual development by practicing prayer, explaining the meaning of worship, reading and discussing the Qur'an, teaching basic beliefs, and connecting religious values to everyday decisions. A child should learn that honesty matters in examinations, fairness matters in friendship, and trustworthiness matters in business because faith shapes conduct, not merely ritual identity.

Religious teaching should be gradual and suitable to age and understanding. Young children benefit from short stories, routines, songs, or memorization when appropriate, and the visible warmth of family worship. Older children need opportunities to discuss difficult questions and understand the wisdom behind religious duties. Shaming children for questions or using religion only as a threat can weaken trust and reduce sincere engagement.

b. Moral character and social responsibility

A successful child should learn truthfulness, patience, respect, compassion, self-control, gratitude, and responsibility. Repeated practice teaches these virtues. Parents can involve children in household tasks, encourage them to keep promises, discuss the consequences of harmful behavior, and invite them to repair damage when they have hurt someone. Moral education should focus on understanding and accountability rather than fear of punishment alone.

The Qur'anic emphasis on humility and moderate conduct in Luqman's counsel (Qur'an 31:18–19) is relevant to modern pressures for status and display. Parents can teach children to celebrate achievement without arrogance, compete without cheating, and use their abilities to benefit others. A child's character is tested not only when praised but also when disappointed, corrected, or confronted with someone less powerful.

c. Intellectual and academic development

Education provides children tools to understand the world, solve problems, communicate, and contribute to society. Parental involvement can include asking about school, providing time and space for study, reading with children, contacting teachers when concerns arise, and encouraging curiosity. The purpose is not to do a child's homework but to develop independence and a positive relationship with learning.

Research reviews have found that parental involvement is associated with educational outcomes, although the strength and form of the relationship vary across practices and contexts (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2007). Warm expectations, communication about learning, and academic socialization may be more useful than excessive control over every assignment. Parents should recognize individual differences and avoid comparing siblings in ways that undermine confidence.

d. Emotional and psychological well-being

Children need to feel that they are valued even when they make mistakes or struggle academically. Listening attentively, naming emotions, keeping promises, and responding calmly help build security. Such care does not mean agreeing with every demand. It means communicating that the child's dignity remains intact while behavior can still be corrected.

A parent should take persistent withdrawal, severe anxiety, abrupt behavioral change, prolonged sadness, or signs of abuse seriously. Religious encouragement may provide comfort and meaning, but it should not replace

professional assessment when a child needs specialized support. Seeking help is a responsible expression of care, not a failure of faith.

e. Physical health and digital safety

Physical well-being is part of a child's ability to learn and participate in life. Adequate nutrition, sleep, exercise, preventive healthcare, and a safe home environment support development. Parents should also teach age-appropriate personal safety, boundaries, and how to seek help from trusted adults.

Digital devices create opportunities for learning and connection, but they also expose children to distraction, harmful material, cyberbullying, privacy risks, and misleading information. Effective parental guidance combines reasonable limits, shared rules, adult examples, and open discussion. Secretive surveillance or blanket bans may be ineffective if they prevent children from asking for help. Rules should be clear, proportionate, and adjusted as the child matures.

4. Parenting Practices That Support Success

a. Affection joined with consistent boundaries

A constructive home environment combines warmth with predictable expectations. Children need both belonging and structure. Parents can explain rules, apply them consistently, and use consequences related to the behavior rather than humiliation. For example, if a child damages a sibling's belongings, the response may include an apology and a reasonable effort to repair or replace the item. Insults and physical punishment do not teach the same lesson as accountability and repair.

Baumrind's influential work on parenting styles helped distinguish patterns of parental warmth and control, while later scholarship has emphasized the complexity of parenting across cultures and contexts (Baumrind, 1966). No single typology can capture every family, but the broader lesson remains useful: care should be neither neglectful nor needlessly authoritarian. Firmness is most

constructive when accompanied by explanation, respect, and emotional availability.

b. Communication and attentive listening

Parents should create regular opportunities for conversation without immediately turning every discussion into a lecture. Questions such as "What was difficult today?" or "What do you think would be a fair solution?" invite reflection. When children disclose mistakes or troubling experiences, an initial response of listening can make it more likely that they will return for guidance.

Respectful communication does not eliminate parental authority. Rather, it makes authority more intelligible and trustworthy. Parents can disagree with a child's choices while still acknowledging the feelings or pressures behind them. In adolescence, negotiation over reasonable areas of independence can prepare young people to make responsible decisions.

c. Discipline as teaching

The word "discipline" is most useful when understood as the cultivation of self-discipline. Effective correction identifies the behavior, explains why it is harmful, sets a proportionate consequence, and gives the child a path to improve. Parents should distinguish between a child who makes a mistake, a child who lacks a skill, and a child who knowingly repeats harmful conduct; these situations may require different responses.

Physical violence, threats, humiliation, and persistent comparison can damage trust and teach children to conceal rather than reflect. When a parent loses control, acknowledging the mistake and repairing the relationship demonstrates moral responsibility. A sincere apology from an adult does not erase parental leadership; it shows that accountability applies to everyone.

d. Fairness among siblings

Parents should be attentive to differences in age, temperament, disability, learning needs, and circumstance without communicating that one child is inherently more valuable than another. Equal treatment does not always mean

identical treatment, but it does require fairness and transparent reasons for differences. Labeling one child "the clever one" and another "the difficult one" can shape identity and increase rivalry.

Islamic teachings strongly value justice and warn against unjust preference. In practice, parents can distribute time and responsibilities thoughtfully, avoid using siblings as constant comparisons, and provide each child opportunities to be heard. Where conflict arises, they should investigate rather than automatically believe the child who is older, louder, or more academically successful.

5. Parents, Schools, and the Wider Community

Parents are primary caregivers, but they are not expected to educate children alone. Teachers contribute subject knowledge, learning assessment, classroom structure, and observation of peer relationships. A constructive partnership requires communication that is respectful and focused on the child's development. Parents should share relevant concerns with teachers, while teachers should communicate both difficulties and progress rather than contacting families only when something goes wrong.

Epstein's framework for school, family, and community partnerships emphasizes multiple forms of involvement, including communication, learning at home, decision-making, and collaboration with community resources (Epstein, 2011). Not every family has equal time, income, literacy, or access to technology. Schools should therefore avoid assuming that low attendance at meetings necessarily indicates lack of concern. Flexible schedules, clear communication, and culturally respectful outreach can help.

The wider community also influences children through relatives, religious teachers, neighbors, youth groups, sports, and online networks. Parents should select supportive environments while teaching children how to assess peer pressure. Community cooperation is particularly important when families face

poverty, disability-related barriers, parental illness, or other challenges that exceed individual capacity.

6. Barriers to Effective Parental Care

a. Economic pressure and limited time

Financial hardship and demanding work schedules can reduce the time and emotional energy available for parenting. Families should not be judged solely by the amount of time they can spend with children. Predictable, attentive moments—sharing a meal, asking about the day, praying together, or reading before sleep—can communicate care. Institutions and communities also have responsibilities to support family well-being through accessible services and reasonable working conditions.

b. Overemphasis on grades and status

When achievement is measured only by marks, awards, or future income, children may learn to hide failure or treat classmates as rivals. Academic ambition is not wrong, but it should be balanced with honesty, health, kindness, and realistic expectations. Parents can praise effort, strategy, perseverance, and improvement while helping children learn from disappointment. The question should not be only "Did you win?" but also "What did you learn, and how did you treat others?"

c. Inconsistent values between home and school

Children can become confused when adults communicate contradictory expectations. A family may teach respect while insulting service workers, or a school may emphasize integrity while rewarding results without attention to process. Perfect consistency is impossible, but adults should discuss differences openly and explain shared principles. Cooperation is more productive than encouraging children to distrust one environment or another without reason.

d. Digital distraction and changing generations

Parents may feel unfamiliar with the platforms and digital habits used by

their children. Rather than relying solely on prohibition, adults can learn the basic tools, establish device-free times, discuss privacy and online conduct, and model balanced use themselves. Children should know that they can report disturbing messages or online exploitation without automatically losing access to every device as punishment.

e. Religious instruction without compassion

Religious education can become counterproductive when delivered mainly through fear, ridicule, or comparison. The Islamic tradition includes accountability, but also mercy, wisdom, patience, and gradual teaching. Children should encounter religious practice as a source of meaning and ethical orientation, not merely as a tool adults use when frustrated. Compassion does not remove standards; it helps children understand and internalize them.

7. An Integrated Framework for Worldly and Hereafter Success

A holistic framework can be organized around five mutually reinforcing dimensions. First, spiritual formation develops faith, worship, gratitude, and awareness of accountability before God. Second, moral formation develops honesty, justice, humility, and compassion. Third, intellectual formation cultivates literacy, critical thinking, practical competence, and lifelong learning. Fourth, emotional and physical care supports security, health, resilience, and healthy relationships. Fifth, social formation prepares children to serve family and community, cooperate across differences, and contribute responsibly to society.

These dimensions should not be treated as competing priorities. Academic competence can enable a young person to serve others; emotional stability can support worship and study; moral character can guide professional success; and spiritual commitments can provide direction to material achievement. At the same time, parents should not assume that worldly success proves divine favor or that hardship necessarily indicates spiritual failure. Human lives are complex, and

outcomes depend on circumstances beyond parental control.

A practical weekly family routine might include shared worship or reflection, a conversation about school and friendships, reading or study time, a household responsibility for each child, physical activity, and an opportunity to help someone else. The routine should be realistic rather than burdensome. Consistency is generally more sustainable than an ambitious plan that collapses after a few days.

Parents can periodically ask themselves: Does my child feel safe speaking honestly to me? Do my actions reflect the values I teach? Are expectations appropriate to the child's age and abilities? Do I notice emotional as well as academic needs? Do I cooperate with teachers? Does our family use technology in a balanced way? These questions turn the ideal of care into an ongoing process of reflection and improvement.

METHOD

This article uses a qualitative library-research approach. It examines selected Qur'anic passages, well-known Prophetic traditions, classical Muslim ethical and educational writings, and contemporary literature on parental involvement and child development. The method is descriptive and analytical: sources are read in relation to the article's central question, key themes are organized, and points of convergence and difference are discussed. Qur'anic references are cited by surah and verse; hadith references are identified by collection and, where appropriate, book or commonly used numbering. Hadith numbering can differ between editions, so readers should verify the numbering against the edition they consult.

The article is a conceptual review rather than an empirical field study. It does not claim to measure the effect of a particular parenting intervention or to represent every Muslim family. Contemporary studies are used to contextualize general educational principles, while Islamic sources provide the article's normative framework. This distinction is important: empirical research can describe associations

and developmental patterns, whereas religious texts establish ethical and spiritual obligations within the Islamic tradition.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The sources considered in this article point toward a shared conclusion: children's development is relational. The Qur'anic model of Luqman's counsel combines conviction, worship, conscience, patience, and manners; the Prophetic teaching on responsibility makes caregiving an accountable duty; and the hadith about the righteous child highlights the intergenerational and spiritual significance of upbringing. Contemporary educational literature adds that family involvement can support learning, although its effects depend on the form of involvement and the social context.

An important implication is that parental care should be understood as a process rather than a single activity. Paying school fees is important, but it cannot substitute for communication. Religious instruction is important, but a parent's own example strengthens it. Rules can protect children, but rules without warmth may undermine trust. Love is essential, but love without guidance may leave children unprepared for responsibility. Effective parenting therefore requires a balance among affection, structure, example, and adaptation.

A second implication concerns the limits of parental control. Parents can create conditions that make beneficial choices more likely, but they cannot fully determine a child's future. Children have their temperaments, relationships, opportunities, and moral agency. A child may face illness, discrimination, economic barriers, or other challenges despite attentive parenting. The appropriate response is not to promise perfect outcomes or blame parents for every difficulty but to recognize responsibility while acknowledging human limits.

A third implication is that the idea of success must be defined ethically. Income, qualifications, and social recognition may be valuable, but they are incomplete

measures. From the Islamic perspective, success also includes lawful conduct, fulfillment of obligations, kindness to others, and preparation for accountability before God. This broader definition helps parents avoid sacrificing a child's well-being for prestige and encourages the use of worldly knowledge for beneficial purposes.

Finally, the framework should be applied with cultural sensitivity and attention to family circumstances. Muslim families vary in language, economic resources, household structure, and educational background. Different expressions can convey the principles of mercy, justice, responsibility, and positive example. Recommendations should support parents rather than shame them, and institutions should help create the conditions in which responsible care is possible.

CONCLUSION

Parental care is essential to children's success in this world and the hereafter because the family is a foundational environment for faith, character, learning, emotional security, health, and social responsibility. Islamic sources present parenting as a trust and an accountable responsibility. Qur'an 66:6 emphasizes family protection, while Qur'an 31:13–19 presents Luqman's counsel as an integrated model of belief, worship, patience, humility, and respectful conduct. Prophetic traditions reinforce responsibility toward dependants and the lasting spiritual significance of a righteous child.

Effective care is not limited to material provision or the pursuit of high academic results. It includes affectionate communication, ethical modelling, consistent and non-abusive discipline, age-appropriate religious teaching, support for learning, digital and physical safety, fairness among siblings, and cooperation with schools and communities. Such care should be realistic, responsive to individual needs, and sustained over time.

Parents cannot guarantee every outcome, but they can offer a strong foundation. The most constructive goal is to raise children who are capable and resilient in worldly life, honest and compassionate in their relationships, responsible

in society, and oriented toward faith and accountability in the hereafter. This requires not perfection from parents but sincere effort, continuing learning, prayer, and a willingness to repair mistakes.

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