

# INSTILLING CHILDREN'S CHARACTERS THROUGH STORYTELLING METHODS IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

(Menanamkan Karakter Anak Melalui Metode Bercerita pada Pendidikan Usia Dini)

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## Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menggali nilai-nilai yang terdapat dalam cerita anak tradisional yang disampaikan dengan tradisi mendongeng. Cerita memuat nilai-nilai positif untuk membentuk karakter pada anak-anak dan tradisi mendongeng terjalin kedekatan emosional. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dan deskriptif dari cerita-cerita anak Minangkabau. Cerita diambil dari dokumentasi yang telah dikumpulkan dari cerita lisan kemudian dituliskan. Analisis dilakukan dengan studi literatur yang memperhatikan dan memprioritaskan nilai-nilai yang terkandung dalam sebuah cerita tersebut. Cerita yang terpilih didongengkan pada anak di pra sekolah dan TK. Waktu mendongeng guru memberikan penekanan dan menambahkan pesan di setiap akhir cerita. Keberhasilan proses dari bercerita itu diperlihatkan dari aktifitas anak pada awal, waktu berlangsung, dan setelah mereka makan. Siswa yang mengalami dan melaksanakan sikap yang positif ditandai. Hasil penelitian ini mendapatkan bahwa tradisi mendongeng efektif untuk membentuk karakter anak yaitu menjalankan ajaran agama Islam terutama tata cara makan, bersikap kejujuran dalam mengambil makanan, menjalankan kedisiplinan, menjaga kebersihan, dan memperlihatkan sikap kemandirian.

**Kata-kata kunci:** Cerita anak Minangkabau, anak pra sekolah, tradisi mendongeng, dan karakter.

## Abstract

This article explores the values contained in traditional children's stories told in the storytelling tradition. Reports have positive values to shape character in children, and the rule of storytelling creates emotional closeness. This research uses qualitative and descriptive methods from Minangkabau children's stories. The story is taken from the documentation collected from oral reports and then written down. Conducting an analysis involves literature studies that focus on and prioritize the values embedded in a story. Preschool and kindergarten children then listen to the selected stories. When telling stories, the teacher emphasizes and adds a message at the end of each level. The success of the storytelling process is shown by the children's activities at the beginning, during the time, and after they eat. Students who experience and implement positive attitudes are marked. This research found that the storytelling tradition is influential in shaping children's character, namely following the teachings of the Islamic religion, especially eating habits, being honest in taking food, exercising discipline, maintaining cleanliness, and showing an attitude of independence.

**Keywords:** Minangkabau children's stories, preschool children, storytelling traditions, and characters.

## INTRODUCTION

Character-related conversations will never stop. We will always have it, and we will continuously evaluate the evolution. Discussion of the character development process has started since human relations began and their impact on people's lives. Character formation is a central issue and primary goal in a family, school, and society. Character is a collection of positive traits from thoughts and behavior. (Lestari, 2012). Parents and educators should develop children's character from an early age. Developing one's character must be accompanied by leadership. Children find the lessons the teacher teaches could be more interesting because of the teacher's boring personality (Mu'in, 2011).

To create favorite lessons through storytelling, especially for children. Many psychologists state that experiences in early childhood greatly influence their character development. Children who are successful at the beginning of life will generally experience good experiences in the future (Sit, 2015). Early childhood development includes physical, social, emotional, and cognitive. At an early age, a child begins interacting with the people around him, his parents, and the community in his environment. At this age, children have begun to differentiate between good and evil. Parents or educators can start introducing them to the name of God and religious knowledge suitable for their understanding. A child aged 4-6 years is also called a preschool-age child in terminology. This age is a sensitive period for them. Experts call this period the golden age, where intelligence development has increased by up to 50% (Zaini, 2015).

Young children, especially those who have just entered school and socialize with people outside their family environment, will experience obstacles such as wanting to express their wishes. Data from research concludes that the storytelling method can make children speak fluently. Children convey their thoughts quickly, and their word choice and sentence structure are good. Storytelling helps children improve their

language skills (Rafiola et al., 2022).

Telling stories in kindergarten, for example, conveys an incident at length. Inviting children to tell stories in groups makes their storytelling more focused, facilitates easier responses to given questions, and enhances their ability to remember the story's elements (Hellen, 2021). In learning English, the storytelling method is also very effective, especially when conveying it verbally. Those invited to tell stories were those whose English skills were still low by telling four recorded stories. Students are divided into two groups and then asked to repeat or retell the story. They have recorded and discussed the stories online using social media (Khodabandeh, 2018). The storytelling method is not only effective for children but also for all groups and ages. For example, storytelling has been proven more effective in teaching language by utilizing traditional stories. By telling stories, students are happier and more interested, increasing their interest in listening to stories and being invited to tell them again (Yulianawati et al., 2022).

There are many benefits to the tradition of telling stories. However, older people, such as when tucking children into bed, seldom engage in this less popular form of storytelling (Gayatri, 2020). The introduction of television media has gradually led to the abandoning of the storytelling tradition, causing a shift in family entertainment towards watching television (Udasmoro et al., 2012). This condition is made worse by children's increasingly dominant use of cell phones.

The use of cell phones or smartphones by children or the younger generation is massive. It proved that last year, Indonesia was ranked 4th in the world with the most significant cellphone users, 192.15 million Sadya (2023). The use of smartphones in society has a dilemma because it has a negative impact, especially on children. The positive impacts of using technology for children include learning and searching for resources online and interacting with friends and family via text messages, video calls, and social media. However, irregular use has a negative impact, especially on children's mental health. They

can be addictive, sleep disorders, increased depression, and anxiety. Addiction to using cell phones makes children lazy about studying. It reduces social skills and interaction between friends so that children are only busy with themselves, especially if they see scenes or information unsuitable for children to hear and see, such as violence, sexuality, and harsh language (Yumarni, 2012). Frequently using cell phones causes children to lack interaction with the social environment. Therefore, the tradition of telling stories invites children to become involved again, considering they generally like stories. The storyteller can influence the child's emotions, aiming for a specific effect. Preschool learning still incorporates storytelling alongside other approaches, including singing, excursions, role-playing, demonstrations, assignments, and exercises (Zaini, 2015).

Children telling stories together can develop their ability to convey new vocabulary, better sentence structures, and various language styles emerge. Educators help children enhance their speaking skills and place greater emphasis on listening, reading, and writing. Storytelling shows that children remember vocabulary more quickly and understand text. They convey their thoughts in friendly language (Yulianawati et al., 2022).

The storytelling activity involved narrating folklore. The research results showed that students' speaking skills improved significantly by using folklore. From the distributed questionnaire, it turned out that students liked learning to speak through folklore, so teachers dug up traditional stories in their environment to help them learn speaking skills (Osman et al., 2015). Another research study concludes that folklore-based learning can enhance students' learning abilities, particularly speaking skills. It can also serve as a motivation for students to learn how to express their opinions. In addition, folklore is easy to use to educate, inspire, and involve students in various speaking activities. Besides that, folklore enriches students' local cultural awareness (Mantra et al., 2018).

Apart from that, stories are also helpful for 1) helping children's personal and moral formation, 2) channeling their imagination and fantasy needs, 3) stimulating children's verbal abilities, 4) stimulating their interest in writing, 5) stimulating their interest in reading, and 6) opening their horizons of knowledge (Musfiroh, 2008). Especially for preschool children who cannot yet read or write, storytelling or story telling is often used. Many studies confirm that stories and fairy tales are used as material to teach values to children and are very helpful for teachers in preschool education. Preschoolers are unlikely to learn values by reading books. This period teaches values by prioritizing love and volunteering, not by coercion. Teachers are required not to teach with emotional behavior but to be realistic and logical. Learning about values is more critical in verbal than written curricula (Onder, 2017).

However, forms of oral communication with people closest to it, such as telling stories, are becoming tiresome and unmodern, so the storytelling culture is being abandoned (Gayatri, 2022). Children automatically experience decreased direct contact or verbal conversation because the storytelling tradition suits them. Physical contact and verbal communication create an emotional bond between the child and the parent or person telling the story (Tulius, 2013). The emotional closeness of story time provides space for parents to instill positive character and life values in children (Jirata, 2013; Rokhmawan et al., 2017). Apart from that, local stories around schools, such as prose stories, myths, legends, or fairy tales told in oral culture, can be preserved by packaging them as story books such as illustrated children's stories (Srimulyati et al., 2020). Presenters convey children's stories captivantly, transforming them into colorfully illustrated cartoon films that contain increasingly intriguing moral teachings (Rokhmawan et al., 2017).

People's memories store traditional stories with a structure resembling modern literary texts, which educators can use as teaching materials in schools. These materials include moral messages from

folklore, contributing to character education. Kusmana (2021) studied traditional stories circulating in Cirebon Regency. Educators use teaching materials developed from folklore for high and vocational school students. Suppose traditional stories are not repeated and transformed in various ways, such as writing them down, processing them into picture story books, making films, or making soap operas. In that case, the stories will not disappear. People carried out this metamorphosis exercise to help them remember oral histories. That happened in the oral story of Malin Kundang in Minangkabau culture. A Google search reveals several novels written by different authors that tell the story of Malin Kundang. Furthermore, extending the search reveals dance and ballet performances inspired by the oral stories of Malin Kundang (Gayatri, 2020).

From the various positive values obtained from the storytelling tradition, the author is interested in seeing how far this storytelling tradition can direct preschool children in eating activities. Preschool, kindergarten, or PAUD children generally engage in eating. During eating activities, one can observe several characteristics: 1) implementing Islamic teachings, 2) practicing honesty, 3) demonstrating discipline, 4) maintaining cleanliness, and 5) showing independence.

## **THEORITICAL STUDY**

This descriptive qualitative research method describes and analyzes the learning process before, during, and after eating activity. To conclude, the calculations obtained are used to determine the story's effectiveness in forming characters and only describe or make general conclusions. We observed preschool children entering the field before the new school year. The preschool taken was one kindergarten, Bundo Kandung Kindergarten, which is located in Jorong Ampang Gadang District. Guguak, Limapuluh Kota Regency and Cahaya Gemilang PAUD are in Jorong Sunua District. Nan Sabaris, Padang Pariaman

Regency. Five teachers observed the children's behavior during the meal schedule. The children sampled were children who had just entered the preschool environment. In the early stages, children who have just entered this environment must familiarize themselves with the rules, values, and activities. Therefore, for two days, their eating activities were allowed by the activities brought from their household environment. After three days, the teacher told us how to eat by narrating a story that featured five characters for those two weeks. We continuously ask for verification from the teacher and then analyze the collected data, proceeding to conclude. The teacher observes his students' activities based on each character's indicators.

Paying attention to the target character during eating activities, the teacher makes observations. Teachers and researchers jointly discuss and arrange these character targets, guided by indicators based on the child's abilities, level, conditions, and the school's infrastructure.

We observed changes in the children's attitudes and characters for three weeks. At the end of the observation, the teacher received a completed prepared table. The children used as samples were children who had just entered school. When providing teaching material, the teacher tells a story that contains messages appropriate to the target character. When telling stories, the teacher asks questions so that children can understand the story's message.

The presenter delivers the story material in Indonesian and sometimes in Minangkabau. The use of the Minangkabau regional language is considering that many children still use their mother tongue to communicate with their parents, and the research location is in a rural area. Researchers, in this case, are sometimes not always present in the room so that the child's atmosphere is natural. For this reason, there are discussions between teachers and researchers via chat and WhatsApp.

The teacher told the story; after seeing the conditions and atmosphere of the storytelling tradition during the lesson, we

requested the teacher to retell the story for ease of transcription. We recorded, transcribed, and translated the stories into Indonesian. After conducting an analysis, we identified the characters within the story.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The learning material is done by telling stories to make children more interested, focused, and exciting but does not patronize them. Several times, the teacher promised at the beginning of the lesson that they would tell a story, so they would ask for it before the teacher told the story. Preschool children like the storytelling method in kindergarten and elementary school children who are still in the lower grades. The storytelling method is an excellent method and is very popular with children because humans have a fantastic influence that allows someone to remember all the events in a story quickly. The story is told in various ways to make it more interesting for children. The time to instill religious values shows that in efforts to apply storytelling methods using media such as dolls, illustrations, or other media. The process of applying the storytelling method takes place during learning and habituation activities. After this method is carried out and accompanied by appropriate efforts, We can further review the percentage of success achieved (Hamdanah, 2022).

### *Teaching Religious Values*

Since birth, a person has possessed potential, and nurturing and education can develop the seeds of ability. Religion is the initial foundation for teaching a sense of faith in a child, whereas, in religion, there are two essential elements: beliefs and procedures. The two cannot be separated and are fostered and taught in a person as early as possible. Religious education is the main foundation for teaching faith to prepare a child for life in the future (Tadjuddin, 2014).

In preschool learning, religious values are taught, including introducing short verses and prayers for daily activities. Currently, the practice of Islamic teachings is limited to eating and drinking. Whether or not children practice Islamic teachings is based on the indicators below.

**Table 1.**

Indicators of Implementing Islamic Teachings		
No	TK Bundo Kanduang	PAUD Cahaya Gemilang
1	Say thank you after being given food	Say thank you after being given food
2	Read Bismillah and pray before eating	Read Bismillah and pray before eating
3	Say Alhamdulillah after eating	Say Alhamdulillah after eating
4	Children pray fervently and do not joke before and after eating	

In Islam, the implementation or procedures for eating are regulated in such a way, one of which is by reading prayers before and after eating. We teach eating procedures like this as early as possible; for example, if a mother gives food to her child before eating, she is invited to say Bismillah. Mother taught and said Bismillah hirahmanirahim in a loud voice. This method introduces eating habits according to the Islamic religion, even though a child cannot repeat or speak. After a child enters preschool, eating habits like this are introduced and taught according to the traditions that apply in each preschool. We teach children to read prayers before eating at Bundo Kanduang Kindergarten and Cahaya Gemilang Kindergarten. They wash their hands first and then read the prayer together. After that, the children take food, which is sometimes provided by the teacher, but sometimes it is brought from home.

Many children do not know how to eat or read prayers in the early stages. They eat to their heart's content. However, after being taught and told how to eat according to the Islamic religion, there was a change in the way he ate. At other times, the teacher tells a story using a role-playing method whose aim is to teach eating etiquette and meal prayers. Below is the part of the story that teaches how to eat and drink.

#### **Helping Grandma**

Grandma : Please get Grandma some water;  
Grandma is thirsty

Bilqis : Yes, Grandma (Bilqis goes to get water for Grandma)

Bilqis : This is water, Grandma, drink it first, Grandma

Grandma : Yes, what shall we read, dear, before

- drinking?
- Bilqis : Prayer for eating and drinking, Grandma
- Grandma : Try it. Grandma needs to remember. Can you try my granddaughter?
- Bilqis : Yes, Grandma.
- Bismillahirrahmannirrahim allahumma baariklikanaa fima razaktanaa wakinnaa adzabannar.* That's it Grandma, drink it Grandma.
- Grandma : Yes, Grandma drinks—  
*Bismillahirrahmannirrahim* (while sipping water). Wow, I am relieved, Grandma's thirst has disappeared. Thank you, darling
- Bilqis : Yes Grandma
- Grandma : Where is Farhan?
- Bilqis : Yes Grandma
- Grandma : Please, call him.
- Bilqis : Abang, Abang... Bang Farhan. Grandma is here.
- Farhan : Oo Grandma, Grandma, have you just arrived, Grandma? *Assalamualaikum* Grandma, greetings Grandma
- Grandma : Yes, Grandma's children are already intelligent; both of Grandma's grandchildren are smart. Farhan here darling, what did you study at school?
- Farhan : Learn to read short verses, Grandma
- Grandma: What is the letter dear?
- Farhan : Alfatihah letter, Grandma
- Grandma: Can grandma's grandchildren read it? Grandma would like to listen
- Farhan : Yes, Grandma. *Bismillahirrahmanirrahim.* (Read Al Fatihah). Amen!
- Grandma : Amen. Grandma's grandson is already intelligent. Everyone is smart. Thank you, darling. Grandma was happy to hear that.

The story told by the teacher contains religious values, especially teaching reading Bismillah and praying before drinking. A grandmother conveys it through dialogue with her grandson. Here, the teacher does not directly teach prayer and reading Bismillah but conveys it through dialogue between the characters in the story. The dialogue in bold is the reading before and prayer before eating.

After telling the story, the teacher will emphasize it and remind you whenever you want to eat. After that, the children read Bismillah and read the meal prayer together. However, there are also children who no longer have to be reminded and can immediately read Bismillah and pray spontaneously. At home, their parents have also guided them, so they are used to doing it.

The photo is where children pray before eating.



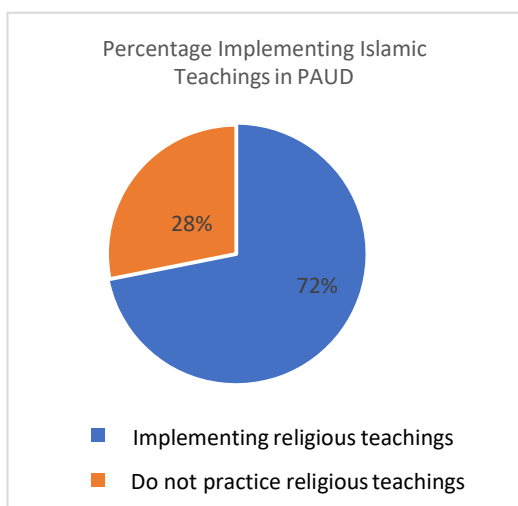
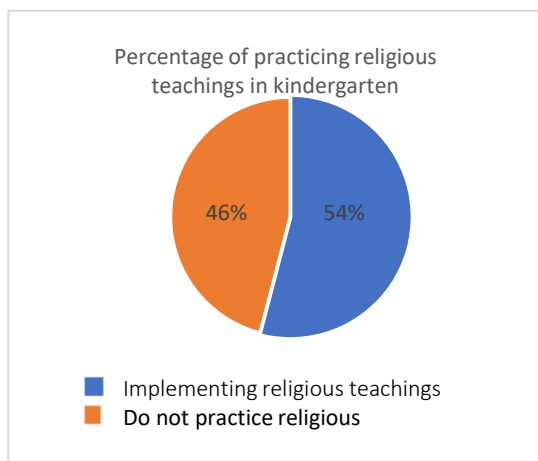
**Photo 1.** Bundo Kandung Kindergarten children are praying



**Photo 2.** Cahaya Gemilang PAUD children are praying.

At Bundo Kanduang Kindergarten, 17 children still need to fully implement the teachings of the Islamic religion, especially reading prayers before eating, and 20 people can already read prayers. In contrast to Cahaya Gemilang PAUD children, nine people cannot read prayers, and 23 people can read prayers. Compared with the other characters of the 37 children in Kindergarten and 32 children in PAUD, implementing the teachings of the Islamic religion with the indicators that have been made, it turns out that many of them need to be more fluent in reading prayers. The reason is that prayers must be memorized over a long period, not just a few minutes in 3 weeks like this. If the time for guiding them to read the prayer is longer, they will have more time to memorize and recite it.

## Chart of Implementing Islamic Teachings



## Teaching Honesty

The indicators in this section are based on children's honesty in taking food. There are seven honesty indicators in kindergarten and only 2 in PAUD. These indicators are compiled based on habits generally carried out by children at that age. Boys aged around six have much more activity compared to children still at the PAUD level, such as their level of delinquency, dependency, and independence has increased. In contrast to children at the PAUD level, they are still very obedient and not very active in socializing with people outside their environment, so they are easily controlled and directed. Therefore, there are many indicators, as seen below.

**Table 2.**  
Honesty Indicator

No	Indicator	
	TK Bundo Kanduang	PAUD Cahaya Gemilang
1	Do not take more than the specified food.	Do not take more than one pack of food
2	Be honest about whether the food is good or bad	If you ask for extra food, ask permission first because there are foods you like
3	Eating teachers' books that were take without asking permission	
4	Sportsmanship admits that he does not throw away food wrappers	
5	Do not steal friends' food	
6	Take a friend's eating utensils	
7	Fighting over seats when eating	

They teach the character of honesty in children at the PAUD level with a story entitled The Dishonest Child. The storyteller has told this story three times. When the teacher tells the story, the children listen seriously. Before telling the story, the children choose food according to their wishes in the first week of learning. The food is more than one cake, and some take 2, 3, or 4 cakes. They took it in a scramble.

If a child can honestly take food, we will support other characteristics such as discipline or cleanliness. Honest children will not fight over food or take what belongs to their friends. Children of this nature will be willing to queue when picking up food. The photo below shows the conditions of the scramble to get food in the first week.



**Photo 1.** Fighting to eat Photo





**Photo 2.** Eating while standing



**Photo 3.** Taking food without fighting over



**Photo 4** Taking food one by one

After hearing the story, they changed and no longer fought over food. The photo below shows that they are orderly, taking food individually, and have reduced taking more than one pack. In the photo below, you can see them queuing to wait their turn to get food so that there is no pushing and shoving of their friends.

In the second week, the teacher also told a story to show the importance of honesty with children. The teacher tells the story below two times. Here is the story.

#### **Anak Yang Tidak Jujur**

*Ada suatu musim, jambu sedang berbuah lebat di rumah tetangga. Si Rapi mengambil buah jambu tanpa permisi dan tidak meminta terlebih dahulu. Dia panjat jambu tetangga yang banyak masak secara diam-diam. Tiba di ateh dia makan, diambil yang besar-besar dan bagus. Dimasukkan ke bajunya, tidak tahu orang termasuk tetangga sebelah yang mempunyai jambu.*

*Ternyata, di batang jambu di atas, ada sarang tawon. Tawon itu merasa terganggu oleh si Rapi yang di atas batang jambu. Kening si Rapi disengatnya. Si Rapi kesakitan, "Aduhh... Aduh...". Datang satu ekor lagi, digigitnya lagi si Rapi itu kembali. Si Rapi kesakitan bergegas untuk*

*turun, tidak sangaja akhirnya jatuh. "Bugh..." jatuh ke bawah, jambu dalam baju berserak. Si Rapi menangis kesakitan "Aduhh.... Aduhhh....".*

*Terdengar oleh tetangga yang punya jambu "Eh suara siapa itu? Siapa yang menangis-nangis itu? Dilihat dulu ya". Pergi dia ke sebelah rumah, ternyata si Rapi. "Kamu kiranya Rapi? terjatuh manjat jambu?. Haa ada yang sakit ya?" kata ibu sebelah.*

Children can easily understand the story message conveyed by the teacher. From the beginning, when the teacher tells the story, we can draw a message from the story's title. Then, the teacher adds emphasis to the advice contained in the story. Below is his advice.

So, "If you want guava, ask your mother who has it. There is no need to climb it. That is why wasps bite it. So children, if you ask for something, ask nicely. That person will love it. People are not stingy. An example of being neat is when he secretly climbed and got bitten by a wasp. That is the result of dishonest people, people who like to steal. Finally, God rewarded him. If you take things as you please, you will face consequences, and it will incur the displeasure of Allah. Therefore, seeking permission before taking someone's belongings or fruits is essential. That is called stealing. That is not schoolboy behavior. That person is a thief and a sinner. If there is food or fruit, ask nicely.

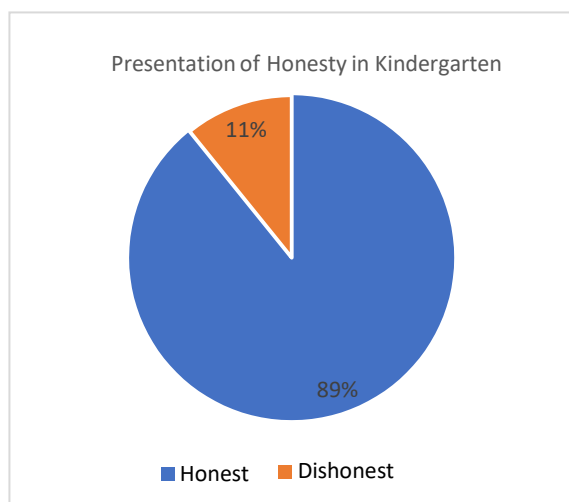
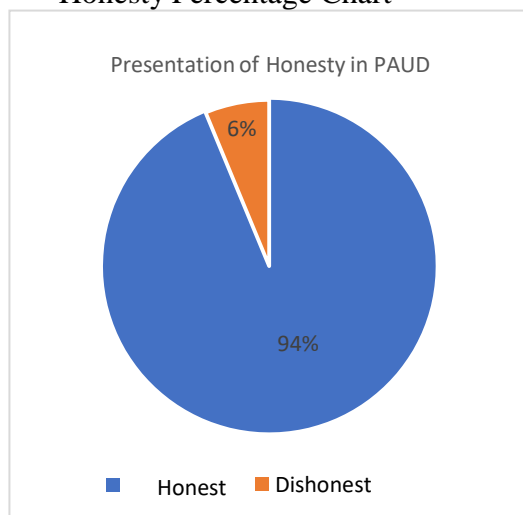
At the end of the story, the teacher adds a message by providing various questions and comments. This method strengthens and provides feedback on whether children understand the story's message.

People must instill, implement, and maintain honesty in their everyday lives, wherever they are. If a child already has the characteristic of honesty in any conditions and circumstances, he will continue to be honest. One example on several campuses



has recently been the emergence of honesty canteens. Many students can only achieve it if they are honest. The honesty canteen will only survive if many students are honest, considering that there is no guard in this shopping method and the buyer puts the money in the box provided (Anam, 2019).

Honesty Percentage Chart



The percentage of honesty in both preschools shows good character results; more than 85% of children are honest when taking food. The percentage of honest characters is the best compared to other characters. In kindergarten, four children are not honest, while in PAUD, there are two people.

### Developing Independence

Independence is part of a child's development process toward maturity. If you pay attention, a child's independence

nowadays is very minimal. One of the causes of children's lack of independence is that the attention and needs of a child are provided by parents, thus making children far from being independent. A child is cared for and always looked after by a household assistant or babysitter. From this type of parenting, the independence of a poor child from a well-off child with complete facilities is evident, and the difference in how to deal with problems and difficulties is noticeable.

Training a child's independence can be done by 1) giving the child confidence to do something according to his abilities, 2) allowing him to do something on his own, 3) creating a safe environment for the child to try while still paying attention to the child's safety and security, 4) provide assistance and reinforcement for children's work, as well as appreciation for the results of their work according to their abilities (Fadila, 2023). Children who do not yet have independent characteristics, mainly children aged 5 to 7 years, include wearing their daily clothes and cannot take off and put on socks and shoes themselves (Lestari, 2023).

The teacher's story below reinforces the consequences of a child's lack of independence at this age. The teacher tells a story like this based on his observations while teaching.

#### Rani Anak Yang Mandiri

Sore hari, Rani bermain dengan teman-temannya. Nama temannya ada Arsyad, Ririn, Rahma dan Alin. Sedang asyik-asyik bermain, Arsyad berbicara kepada Rani, "Rani, kita sudah bisa membereskan mainan kita sendiri, sudah kita main kita bereskan mainan kita. Tidak ada yang membantu kita Rani, sehingga mainan kita setelah bermain kelihatan rapi".

Kemudian Rani manyimak apa yang dikatakan oleh Arsyad. Datang pula sesudah itu si Ririn. Kata Ririn kepada Rani, "Rani, kita sudah bisa makan sendiri, tidak disuapkan oleh mama lagi ya Rani, sudah bisa kita makan sendiri". Rani tetap manyimak apa yang disampaikan si Ririn.

Sesudah itu datang pulo si Rahma, ini kata Rahma kepada si Rani, "Rani, Rahma sudah bisa membantu mama membereskan pekerjaan di rumah, sudah menyapu, menyiram bunga, membantu mama di

rumah". Rani tetap menyimpan apa yang disampaikan oleh Rahma.

Sesudah itu Alin, kata Alin kepada Rani "Rani, Alin lah bisa memakai baju dan sepatu sendiri, tidak ada yang membantu Alin".

Kemudian Rani berpikir sendiri mendengar kata Arsyad, Ririn, Rahma dan Alin. Kemudian Rani yang sebetulnya belum mandiri lagi, tapi dia malu mengakui kepada kawan-kawannya kalau dia belum punya sifat mandiri. Masih dibantu oleh mamanya. Akhirnya, Rani malu. Pergilah dia pulang ke rumah. Dikatakan Rani kepadakawannya.

"Kawan-kawan, saya besok main lagi ya. Rani pulang dulu, perut Rani sudah lapar". "Iyo Rani besok kita main kembali ya Rani" kata kawan-kawannya.

Rani sudah pulang. Tibo di rumah Rani berpikir dalam hati. Kalau kawan-kawannya sudah mandiri. Teringat dalam pikiran si Rani, "Saya harus bisa juga seperti kawan saya itu, saya sama dengan dia. Kenapa mereka bisa saya tidak bisa?". Itu yang ada di dalam hati si Rani.

Akhirnya Rani melihat di rumahnya banyak mainan yang berserak. Dikumpulkannya dan disusunya rapi-rapi. Rani membereskannya. Sudah itu telahsiang, perut Rani sudah lapar.

Dipanggil Rani oleh mamanya, "Rani makan lagi, Nak, Ibu suapin Rani. Ayok makan, Nak". Kata Rani kepada Ibu, "Ibu, maaf ya Bu, Rani mau makan sendiri Bu". Ibunya jadi heran, "Eh, kok Rani mau makan sendiri, bisa kah Rani makan sendiri?".

Akhirnya, Rani mencubo makan sendiri, kawannya kok bisa tidak disuapkan dan Rani makan surang. Ibunya terkejut. "Eh sudah bisa anak Ibu Rani makan sendiri ya. Alhamdulillah. Rani makan lahap, "Wah nikmatnya makan sendiri" kata Rani. Rani teringat kata kawannya. Si Rahma sudah makan membereskan dan mancuci piring, meletakkan piring ke tempatnya, menyapu kalau ada rumah yang berserak. Disapu juga rumah oleh si Rani.

Sudah bersih rumah oleh Rani. Ibunya senang melihat Rani. Teringat pula oleh Rani kata si Alin. Alin bisa memakai baju sendiri. Dicoba pula oleh si Rani, "Besoklah, pergi sekolah Rani pakai baju sendiri lagi, pakai sepatu sendiri".

Akhirnya hari sudah malam. Rani tertidur. Besok pagi Rani bertemu dengan kawan-kawannya di sekolah. Bertemu dengan Arsyad, Riri, Rahma dan Alin. Tiba di sekolah Rani mengucapkan terima kasih sebanyak-banyaknya yang telah menyatakan kemandiriannya masing-masing kepada Rani.

Sahingga Rani timbul kainginannya untuk mandiri seperti kawan-kawannya.

Arsyad, Ririn, Rahma, Alin, sapa Rani. Rani minta tarima kasih yang sebanyak-banyaknya, karena dengan berceritakemaren, Rani sudah berusaha di rumah untuk beres-beres, makan tidak disuapin. Rani membantu mama menyapu, mamakai baju serta sepatu. Tadi menjalang pergi sekolah Rani sudah bisa pakai baju sendiri. Alhamdulillah, tarima kasih ya kawan-kawan."

This story encourages children to be disciplined and independent. The activities in the story are familiar, ordinary, and easy for children to do. The table below shows the activities in the story.

**Table 3.**

Activities in the story "Rani Yang Mandiri"			
No	Activities	Performed by	Characters
1.	Putting on clothes	Alone	Independence
2.	Eat	Alone	Independence
3.	Put away toys	Together	Cleanliness and Independence
4.	Wash dishes	Alone	Cleanliness and Independence
5.	Sweep	Alone	Cleanliness and Independence
6.	Wearing shoes	Alone	Independence
7.	Watering the flowers	Alone	Cleanliness and Independence

Examining the teacher's message in the story, the teachings prioritize discipline, cooperation, and independence. Teaching children habits aligned with their daily activities make it easier for them to comprehend and execute. Independence examples for children at this age include praying independently, attending classes without parental accompaniment, exiting a vehicle without assistance, refraining from crying when left at school, placing their bags and shoes in designated areas, washing hands without assistance, putting on socks, opening their lunch and snacks, and even dressing themselves after using the restroom (Lestari, 2023).

The problem of a child's lack of independence at the age of 4 to 6 years is evident at the beginning of school. Many children feel awkward entering a new

environment and have to be waited on by parents or someone they trust until the child comes home from school. Encountering a lack of independence in children during the first weeks of school is normal. However, if it is more than one or two weeks, it can be categorized as the child not being independent enough. Overcoming children's lack of independence and development by playing has an important role. Therefore, schools and educators need to facilitate time and space for playing. It includes telling stories or reading stories that contain educational values. Telling stories can improve children's imagination. Telling stories can be given variations to make them more attractive, for example, by equipping them with pictures or dolls. Telling stories presented excitingly stimulates children to ask questions or provide responses. Stories are more valuable if implemented according to the child's interests, abilities, and needs (Zaini, 2015).

Independence and discipline can make children responsible and able to solve problems well when dealing with things. Teaching independence and discipline from an early age will train children to obey the rules set by parents and the environment. Independent behavior, in particular, is an attitude and action that does not depend on other people when solving problems or work. Lestari (2023), in her research, gave an example of the independence of a child being able to use toy tools using used items, pieces of block board, beads, and the head of a used toy car.

Below, the indicators of independence for pre-school children that are suitable for them are displayed and arranged according to the activities they carry out at mealtime.

**Table 4.**

Independence Indicator		
Indicator		
No	TK Bundo Kandang	PAUD Cahaya Gemilang
1	Clean seats when eating	You can open the food container yourself (for example, by opening it with scissors,

2.	Children do not ask for help when taking, opening and putting the food box back into the bag	Bribing food is done by yourself and is not spoon-fed
3.	Children can open food packages themselves without asking the teacher for help	Opening and closing the water bottle cap is done by yourself

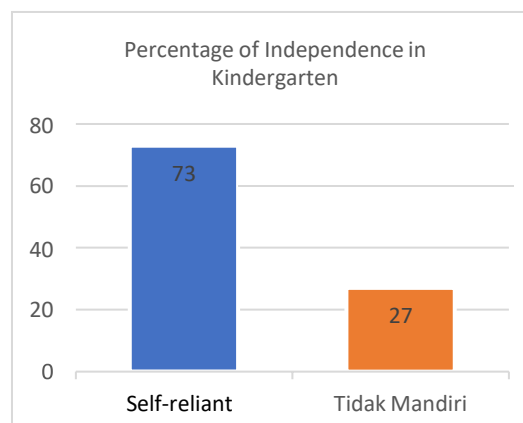
The photo below shows a child's lack of independence by asking his teacher to help him open the food wrapper; while other friends opened it themselves, many opened it and put the food box back into the bag.

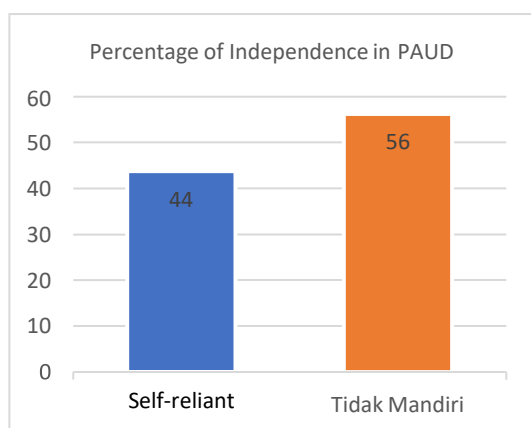


**Photo 6.** Ask for help to open the food wrapper.



**Photo 7.** Students eat alone





The independence of children in kindergarten is higher than in PAUD. 73% of kindergarten children are independent and can clean their seats when eating. In contrast, PAUD children, according to their age and independence, appear to be lower than those in kindergarten. Only 44% of children are independent. It means that less than half of the children in PAUD are not independent; to be precise, 56%.

### Building Discipline

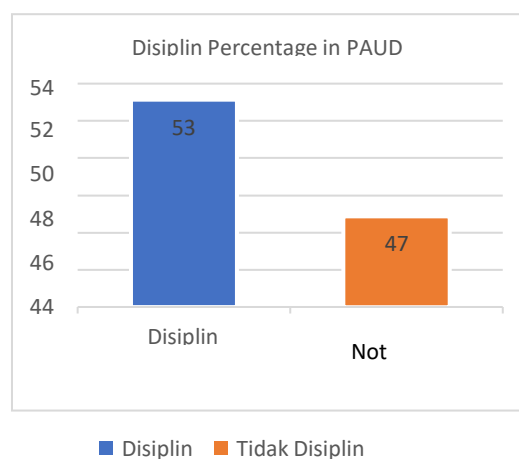
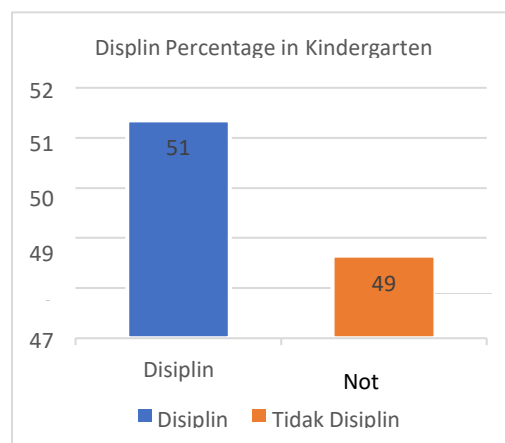
The indicators for each activity vary depending on the objectives of the research. Rustam et al. (2020), for example, created discipline indicators for elementary school children at the Hajjah Siti Syarifah Islamic Education Foundation, such as arriving on time, lining up neatly before entering class, dressing neatly, storing shoes on the shoe rack, tidying up toys after using them, washing hands before and after eating, and throw away rubbish in the right place. However, in this research, the indicators for preschool children are below.

**Table 5.**  
Discipline Indicator

Indicator		
No	TK Bundo Kandang	PAUD Cahaya Gemilang
1	Place eating utensils in the places provided	Taking food without fighting over it
2	Wash your hands before eating	Wash your hands before eating
3	Taking food is not done by fighting over it	Do not take more food than the specified amount

4. Clean and store the dining area again	Patiently and calmly wait in line until your name is called to pick up your food.
5. Eat and drink according to the scheduled time determined by the teacher	Do not disturb friends while eating
6. Queuing attitude when washing hands before and after eating	Do not talk or joke while eating
7. Do not talk when eating or drinking	
8. Listen to instructions from the teacher if you are allowed to go out until the other friends have finished eating.	

With the above indicators, we found that 18 out of 37 students studying at Bundo Kandang Kindergarten lacked discipline. In comparison, 15 out of 32 children at Cahaya Gemilang PAUD lacked discipline. The percentage of disciplined children is 51% in kindergarten and 51% in PAUD. The diagram below illustrates the situation in both preschools.



## Teaching Cleanliness

It is usual for a child to come home from playing dirty. It is up to parents, teachers, and the environment to teach them how to live a clean life—parents who can teach their children the value of cleanliness and make it a habit can save energy. Children who increase their awareness of cleanliness can keep them from various disease threats and provide benefits when they grow up (Alamsyah, (2015). In schools, teachers play an important role in instilling awareness of cleanliness and have strategies for implementing clean and healthy living behavior in children. Children. These strategies include a) introducing, teaching, and developing the importance of maintaining cleanliness and health, providing cleaning equipment, sufficient water supplies, and hand sanitizer. b) remembering clean living behavior, reminding them to be disciplined in disposing of rubbish in their place, implementing a clean and healthy lifestyle, c) evaluating and giving rewards to students, providing guidance, observing and assessing students regarding the cleanliness they have carried out (Sari et al., 2021).

It is challenging to provide and teach cleanliness to preschool and elementary school children due to various problems and limitations, including a) students' lack of understanding and awareness of how to live a clean life, b) incomplete facilities, c) students lack discipline regarding cleanliness (Sari et al., 2021). Despite all the obstacles and lack of facilities to instill a clean way of life, this will be achieved with solid effort so that these obstacles do not become a fundamental problem. This coaching is carried out to help children's mental and physical development. Hence, they are ready for further education, apart from education at this time stimulating children's emotional and intellectual development.

Stimulating children's emotions by telling stories is an alternative that various researchers have proved. This is why the teacher from Cahaya Gemilang PAUD took the story entitled "Children Who Do not Maintain Cleanliness."

## Anak Yang Tidak Manjaga Kebersihan

*Pada suatu hari, Buyung pulang sekolah, sampai di rumah dia sudah letih dan matanya sudah mengantuk pula. Dia langsung terlelap dalam kamar. Waktu dia tidur amaknya memanggil si Buyung itu. "Buyung...Buyung... sudah pulang Buyung, Nak? Makanlah lagi, Nak, Amak sudah siap masak nasi dengan sambal." Tapi si Buyung tidak juga bangun.*

*Akhirnya, amaknya pergi ke belakang sendiri, dia makan saja sendiri. Ternyata hari sudah senja. Buyung belum juga bangun tidur. Tiba-tiba ada kawannya memanggil Buyung. "Buyung...Buyung...keluar lah main bola kita ya. Buyung... oo Buyung..."*

*Buyung terjaga dan terus pergi ke luar bersua dengan kawannya yang memanggil. "Buyung main bola kita ya," kata kawannya. "Iya, cepatlah", kata Buyung. Pergilah Buyung dengan kawannya main bola ke lapangan. Tidak ada Buyung itu minta izin ke amaknya kalau dia pergi main. Karena sudah asik dia main bola, sudah mulai malam hari. Maka pulanglah Buyung itu ke rumah. Sampai di rumah dia sudah kelelahan pula, tidak sempat dia mandi.*

*Sampai di kamar tidur, dibuka sepatu dan kaus kakinya. Dilemparnya saja sepatu dan langsung tidur. Di saat Buyung tidur, ada binatang yang masuk diam-diam ke dalam biliknya. Sambil mencium-cium sesuatu yang baunya serupa dengan bau ikan asin. Dicarinya oleh tikus. Kiranya sepatu si Buyung yang bau ikan asin oleh tikus.*

*Tikus itu langsung masuk ke dalam sepatu si Buyung, tidak keluar-keluar tikus itu sampai hari menjelang pagi. Besok paginya, Buyung bangun ke pergi sekolah karena sudah tergesa-gesa pasang baju, pasang sepatu juga. Tidak sadar Buyung kalau dalam sepatu ada tikus yang sudah tidur sejak malam hari.*

*Pas waktu kaki Buyung masuk ke dalam sepatu. Tikus terkejut dan langsung menggigit kaki Buyung, Buyung kaget dan menangis memanggil amaknya. "Amakk...Amak..., kaki Buyung sakit Mak... Ado yang menggigit kaki Buyung Mak., dalam sepatu Buyung Mak..."*

*Karena mendengar Buyung berteriak-teriak dan menangis-menangis. Amak Buyung itu terkejut. "Apa yang menggigit kaki anak dia itu". Kiranya melompat tikus tadi dari dalam sepatu Buyung. "Horee....."*

*kata tikus sambil lari keluar. "Ondeh nak...kotor kiranya sepatu Buyung ya?, Itu makanya tercium oleh tikus, sehingga tikus sembunyi dalam sepatu kotor itu".*

*"Iya Mak... sudah lama sepatu Buyung tidak dicuci..".*



*“Rajin-rajinlah Buyung mencuci sepatu itu lagi ya, supaya tidak masuk tikus ke dalamnya kalau sudah bersih,” kata amaknya. “Iyoo Mak... Buyung akan rajin mencuci sepatu dan membersihkan kamar Buyung lagi Mak.... Maafkan Buyung yaMak. Salama ini Buyung kurang menjaga kebersihan. Bilik Buyung juga berserak-serak juga Mak...”*

*Kini Buyung akan menjaga kebersihan lagi Mak”. Amak Buyung senang hatinya mendengar Buyung akan menjadi anak yang menjaga kebersihan.*

*Makanya kalau tidak menjaga kebersihan kita sering kena penyakit. Binatang-binatang serupa tikus suka sembunyi-sembunyi di tempat yang berbaun busuk seperti sepatu Buyung tadi yang tidak dicuci-cuci, itulah berbaun. Kalau tikus memang dia suka di tempat yang berbaun.*

The story conveys a message emphasizing the importance of children using clean equipment, such as wearing shoes. In this context, the role of teachers is crucial as they serve as role models for children. Therefore, teachers must effectively uphold children's hygiene, ultimately impacting their learning outcomes. According to Risang Melats (2012:65), educators play a significant role in fostering cleanliness in preschool children through daily activities, including wearing shoes and cleaning up rubbish. Additionally, teachers highlight the importance of nail hygiene, as nails and hands can be a source of bacteria, making children susceptible to diseases. After concluding the story, the teacher further emphasized the significance of cleanliness. The teacher's statement underscores that children should learn to maintain cleanliness, particularly personal hygiene, by bathing regularly and cleaning their clothes, shoes, and socks. The message is that a clean body promotes health and a comfortable mind, preventing unwanted animal disturbances during various activities. Presenting children with these teachings is based on logical reasoning and experiences commonly shared.



**Photo 8.** The teacher is telling a story.



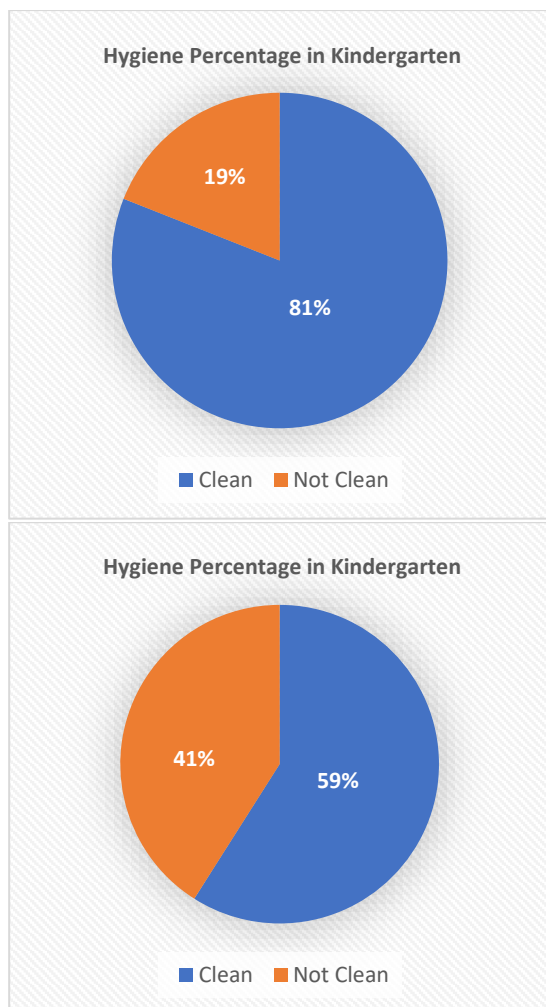
**Photo 9.** Children, after telling a story, cleanliness and discipline cleanliness and discipline in waiting your turn to take food

Maintaining and teaching cleanliness to students when eating is an indicator, as shown in the table below.

**Table 6.**

Cleanliness Indicator		
Indicator		
No	TK Bundo Kanduang	PAUD Cahaya Gemilang
1	Throw away used food in the trash	Throw away food wrappers in the trash
2.	Wash your hands before eating	Wash your hands before eating
3.	Clean up leftover food that is scattered around	Throw away rubbish on site
4.	Clean and store the dining area again	Wash your hands after eating
5	Wash your hands after eating	Brushing teeth in eating the morning
6.	Throw away used food in the trash	Do not get your clothes dirty when eating





With the indicators above, during three weeks of observations, it was found that 81% of the children at Bundo Kandung Kindergarten were able to maintain cleanliness at meal times. These children can already dominantly throw used food into the trash, wash their hands before eating, clean up food leftovers that are scattered around, clean and put away the food container again, and wash their hands after eating. However, 19% of the 37 students still need help understanding cleanliness and the need to put their eating utensils in their proper place. The situation differs from preschool children in PAUD, who still need much training to maintain cleanliness. 41% of them cannot maintain cleanliness, still have a lot of dirty clothes when eating, or do not throw rubbish in the places provided. The age factor causes them to fail to be successful in cultivating cleanliness. The diagram below shows this condition.

## CONCLUSION

Telling stories to instill good character is generally well-received by children and leads to rapid changes in their behavior. This shift in attitude becomes evident as children adhere to Islamic teachings before eating, honestly follow the teacher's guidance in taking food, display discipline in placing utensils in the designated spot, pay attention to cleanliness by disposing of used food properly, and exhibit independence in opening food utensils during meals. Although children may have difficulty reading prayers in Arabic before eating, honesty, cleanliness, discipline, and independence are easily comprehensible and implementable due to the everyday language in the stories. Through storytelling, positive changes in children's attitudes can be observed within three days. Instilling character through storytelling fosters a closer bond between children, teachers, and their peers, fostering mutual liking and respect.

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