

## Evaluation of Willpower Training in Early Childhood in the Context of Value Acquisition

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**Abstract:** Will education, encompasses skills such as making decisions in line with one's desires and goals, taking responsibility, and managing motivation. This education significantly contributes to the development of various skills in children, including self-confidence, sense of responsibility, problem-solving, and communication. One of the negative consequences of digitization today is that children struggle to control themselves, which also complicates the acquisition of values. The study aims to reveal the effects of willpower education in early childhood on value acquisition. The study was conducted within the framework of a qualitative research design, and the document review technique was used in the data collection process. For this purpose, academic sources such as articles, books, and theses were examined, and data obtained from the existing literature were analyzed. After explaining the concepts of will and willpower education, the importance of willpower education in early childhood and its impact on children's value acquisition were evaluated. As a result of the study, the importance of willpower education in value acquisition is emphasized, and activities such as games and drama are recommended for value acquisition through willpower education.

**Keywords:** Religious Education, Early Childhood, Will Education, Values, Value Acquisition, Self-control.

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## Erken Çocuklukta İrade Eğitiminin Değer Kazanımı Bağlamında Değerlendirilmesi

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**Öz:** İrade eğitimi, çocuğun kendi istekleri ve hedefleri doğrultusunda kararlar alabilme, sorumluluk alabilme, motivasyonu yönetebilme gibi becerileri içermektedir. Bu eğitimin çocukların öz güven, sorumluluk bilinci, problem çözme, iletişim gibi birçok becerilerini geliştirmelerinde önemli katkısı bulunmaktadır. Günümüzde dijitalleşmenin olumsuz sonuçlarından biri çocukların kendilerini kontrol etmekte zorlanmalarıdır. Bu durum değerlerin kazanımını da zorlaştırmaktadır. Çalışmanın amacı erken çocukluk döneminde irade eğitimi ve bu eğitimin değer kazanımına olan etkilerini ortaya koymaktır. Çalışmada, nitel araştırma deseni çerçevesinde gerçekleştirilmiş olup, veri toplama sürecinde doküman incelemesi tekniği kullanılmıştır. Bu amaçla, makaleler, kitaplar ve tez çalışmaları gibi akademik kaynaklar incelenmiş ve mevcut literatürden elde edilen veriler analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmada irade ve irade eğitimi kavramları açıklandıktan sonra erken çocukluk döneminde irade eğitiminin önemi ve bu eğitimin çocukların değer kazanımına olan etkisi değerlendirilmiştir. Çalışmanın sonucunda değer kazanımında irade eğitiminin önemi ortaya konulmakta ve değer kazanımı için irade eğitiminde oyun, drama gibi etkinlikler önerilmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Din Eğitimi, Erken Çocukluk, İrade Eğitimi, Değerler, Değer Kazanımı, Öz-denetim.

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## Introduction

The modern age offers individuals technological tools to reach their wants and desires immediately. Everything can now be done with the touch of a finger. For today's people, defined as the age of pleasure and speed, it is becoming difficult to postpone their pleasures or wait patiently. Colorful food, drinks, and clothes offered with technological tools increase pleasure. In our world where speed and pleasure are experienced intensely, instinctive wishes and desires are prioritized. So much so that individuals tend to satisfy instincts, whether voluntary or involuntary. This situation causes addictions to instinctive pleasures. By being captive to passions, material desires, and pleasures become a priority. Children are also affected by the speed and pleasure-based lifestyle offered by their age. Children become eager for everything they desire to happen immediately. Especially modern technological devices are affected negatively. So much so that they react angrily when they do not get what they want immediately.<sup>1</sup> It becomes difficult for children, who get used to having almost everything they want, to make the right decision and to be patient. At the same time, desires are prioritized regardless of whether necessary or unnecessary. This situation negatively affects children's personality formation and prevents the acquisition of values such as respect, empathy, and sharing.<sup>2</sup>

Willpower refers to an important human power such as overcoming procrastination in achieving a goal, being determined for a goal, and making decisions based on long-term results. Will, is an umbrella concept that includes many concepts such as self-discipline, self-control and determination, means will, and command.<sup>3</sup> In other words, it is the mental mechanism that gives power to a thought chosen by reasoning to the extent that it turns into action.<sup>4</sup> The concept of will is defined in the dictionary of philosophy as "*the power to control and determine our actions according to our desires, intentions and goals*".<sup>5</sup> In the Dictionary of Psychology, it is defined as "*the ability to will based on reason, not on emotions and tendencies; the ability to set a goal and purpose by reason; the power to determine will and actions with reason*",<sup>6</sup> and in the dictionary of psychology, it is defined as "*the ability to choose the long-term result against the situation of short-term gain versus long-term and more gain*"<sup>7</sup> is defined as. The will is thought to resemble a muscular structure that gets stronger and stronger as it is used, and principles and set limits are the factors that strengthen this system.<sup>8</sup> If the individual follows his/her impulses, desires, and wishes without questioning them, he/she lives as a satellite of those impulses. In this case, his will is weakened.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, willpower is the ability of the individual to organize his/her wishes, desires, and intentions in the right way according to his/her goals and objectives.

Willpower education is defined as the power of the individual to direct himself, an ability that can be shaped and developed through education.<sup>10</sup> Willpower education aims to act in the way that reason will show by resisting bad feelings, thoughts, and ambitions and gaining dominance over the ego. This education is thought to be effective in three areas: active mental work, acquisition of moral values, and gaining a perspective of happiness.<sup>11</sup> Early childhood is the period when cognitive skills, value acquisition, and life perspective are first formed and affect the individual in later years. In early childhood, temperament, character, and personality begin to take root and become resistant to willpower.<sup>12</sup> The early childhood period generally covers the period from birth to age 6 and is accepted as the period in which most of the

<sup>1</sup> Rüstem Mustafaoglu et al., "The Negative Effects of Digital Technology Usage on Children's Development and Health", *Addicta: The Turkish Journal On Addictions* 5/2 (2018), 240-242.

<sup>2</sup> Ramon Flecha et al., *Effects of the Use of Digital Technology on Children's Empathy and Attention Capacity* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2020), 7.

<sup>3</sup> Şükrü Haluk Akalın, *Türkçe Sözlük*, (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 2011), 1203.

<sup>4</sup> Ethem Bakar, *İrade Terbiyesi*, çev. Ömer Faruk Can (İstanbul: Ketebe Yayınları, 2023), 28.

<sup>5</sup> Ahmet Cevizci, *Felsefe Sözlüğü* (İstanbul: Paradigma Yayınları, 1999), 469.

<sup>6</sup> Bedia Akarsu, *Felsefe Terimleri Sözlüğü* (Ankara: Savaş Yayınları, 1984), 100.

<sup>7</sup> Gary R. VandenBos, *APA Dictionary of Psychology*. (Washington/USA: American Psychological Association, 2015), 953.

<sup>8</sup> Kemal Sayar - Berna Yalaz, *Sanal Ağ Dünyada Gerçek Kalmak* (İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2019), 470.

<sup>9</sup> Jules Payot, *İrade Terbiyesi*, çev. Hakan Alp (İstanbul: Ediz Yayınevi, 2019), 30.

<sup>10</sup> Frank Channing Haddock, *İradenin Gücü*, çev. Berman Erdoğan (Ankara: Yeryüzü Yayınevi, 2004), 23.

<sup>11</sup> Bakar, *İrade Terbiyesi*, 67, 36.

<sup>12</sup> Ali Fuat Başgil, *Gençlerle Başbaşa* (İstanbul: Yağmur Yayınları, 2006), 39.

child's basic development occurs.<sup>13</sup> During this period, children develop rapidly both physically and mentally and acquire behavioral patterns.

Will training is an important period that develops children's emotional and social skills and helps them acquire values, and it is a stage in which the foundations of emotional development are laid. Will education helps children recognize their feelings, express themselves and understand the feelings of others, as well as develop social skills such as respecting the rights of others, cooperating, sharing, and directing social relations more positively. It also helps children develop the skills of managing their behavior, taking responsibility, and making their own decisions. In this way, it prepares the ground for the acquisition of values such as respect, empathy, and cooperation. As a result, willpower training shows the method of obtaining long-term and correct desires instead of being satisfied or satisfying impulsive desires. With this training, children can activate their inner strength to delay gratification, resist distracting impulses, and show determination.

### **Purpose and Importance**

52 Early childhood is considered a critical phase where an individual's personality and core values are shaped. This period is fundamental for personality development, and the willpower education received during this time significantly influences value acquisition in later life. The rapid advancement of technology exposes children to more stimuli through technological devices and social media platforms, leading to encounters with numerous visuals that may or may not align with their values. Platforms prioritizing speed and pleasure send messages that encourage the immediate gratification of desires and wants, making self-control more challenging for individuals. Willpower education is a form of training that can help children develop resistance to intense stimuli and focus on their own goals. It contributes significantly to the development of various skills in children, including self-confidence, sense of responsibility, problem-solving, and communication. Additionally, it aids in managing motivation and dealing with problems encountered on the path to achieving goals. Willpower education also supports the acquisition of values such as respect, patience, empathy, and tolerance. This training is not only about managing personal desires but also about developing social skills like respecting others' rights, cooperation, and empathy. Therefore, this study highlights the importance of willpower education in early childhood for value acquisition.

### **Method**

The present study was structured as a qualitative case study, an investigative approach aimed at comprehensively exploring various factors—such as individuals, environments, events, and processes—about a specific situation. This method is characterized by its holistic perspective, seeking to grasp not only the interplay of these factors within the situation but also their reciprocal influences. In terms of methodology, the study employed document analysis as its primary data collection technique. Document analysis involves a systematic examination of both printed and electronic materials relevant to the subject matter. This process unfolds in three distinct stages: firstly, identifying pertinent data within the documents; secondly, selecting and appraising the gathered data; and finally, synthesizing the findings to derive meaningful insights. This technique combines content analysis and thematic analysis, incorporating review (surface examination), reading (comprehensive review), and interpretation. Thus, the data obtained are organized into categories related to the primary questions of the research.<sup>14</sup> In this study, academic sources such as articles, books, and theses underwent thorough review, and data extracted from existing literature were meticulously analyzed. Following the clarification of the concepts of will and willpower education, the study underscored the significance of instilling willpower education in early childhood and delved into its effects on children's acquisition of values.

<sup>13</sup> Fikret Gülaçtı, "Erken Çocukluk Eğitimi", *Türkiye'de ve Dünyada Erken Çocukluk ve Okul Öncesi Eğitimi*, ed. Fikret Gülaçtı - Songül Tümkaya (Ankara: Pegem Akademi Yayıncılık, 2014), 2.

<sup>14</sup> Glenn A. Bowen, "Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method", *Qualitative Research Journal* 9/2 (2009), 27, 3.

## 1. Will in Terms of Behavioral Dynamics

Ontologically, some behaviors of the human being are voluntary, some behaviors are involuntary, that is, automatic, and some of them are shaped by will. Voluntary behaviors refer to voluntary movements. They are behaviors that occur because of signals transmitted through a communication channel, connect the inner world of the individual to the physical world, and occur by intending or demanding. Intention is the focusing of signals from the brain on changes in the environment by passing through the nervous system and merging on some muscles.<sup>15</sup> Involuntary-automatic movements are called involuntary reflexes and rhythmic movements that are in human nature and occur as a reaction in any situation. Reflex is defined as a quick and involuntary reaction and feedback. Reflexes occur as simple or complex responses. For example, the coughing and sneezing reflex, which removes the irritant in the mucosa, shows involuntary movement.<sup>16</sup> Rhythmic movements are stereotyped behaviors characterized by a sequence of automatically generated, repeated cycles. They are reactive behaviors that develop against the will, such as breathing and scratching.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, some behaviors occur automatically, without volition. In these behaviors, the will has no effect.

Instinct, habit, and suggestion are behaviors shaped by will. Instincts represent basic biological needs such as hunger, thirst, and insomnia that must be fulfilled to maintain physical and psychological balance.<sup>18</sup> Habituation refers to the state of becoming accustomed to a stimulus through repeated exposure to it.<sup>19</sup> Unless new behavior patterns are acquired, previously learned behaviors continue automatically. However, through willpower, automatic behaviors can be changed and new behavior patterns can be created.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, habits can be changed through volitional attitudes. Suggestion, on the other hand, is defined as "the adoption of an idea by influencing it with words, either explicitly or implicitly".<sup>21</sup> Suggestions are behaviors that emerge automatically from the organism like instincts and habits, but can be shaped by the will.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the effects of the will on behavior are classified under three headings: voluntary, voluntary, and shaped by the will. Voluntary behaviors refer to behaviors that occur intentionally, involuntary behaviors refer to behaviors that occur involuntarily, and automatic behaviors shaped by the will refer to behaviors regulated by the biologically existing will.

## 2. Factors Influencing Willpower

Some factors strengthen willpower and those that contribute to its weakening. When these factors are well organized, willpower can be used effectively.

### 2.1. Factors that Strengthen Willpower

Some actions strengthen and weaken the will. In general, actions that strengthen the will are classified under five headings: deep thought, action, being active, being stable, and acquiring the right environment. Deep thought or contemplation means to act by thinking. In other words, it means finding the source of one's behavior, trying to understand why a behavior occurs, and being able to control one's behavior.<sup>23</sup> Deep thinking does not only mean knowing something. Deep thinking is to become conscious of what is thought and to be able to see and understand the difference between what is known and what is realized.<sup>24</sup> Action is defined as work done for a purpose.<sup>25</sup> The action represents the transformation of the seed of thought into a product. When an individual does not use his/her potential and abilities, he/she loses his/her inner harmony and cannot maintain his/her existential integrity. Failure to reveal thought, potential, and abilities

<sup>15</sup> Andrew B. Schwartz, "Movement: How the Brain Communicates with the World", *Cell* 164/6 (2016), 1112.

<sup>16</sup> Tatiana G. Deliağnia, "Overview of Motor Systems. Types of Movements: Reflexes, Rhythmical and Voluntary Movements", *Dynamical Systems, Wave Based Computation and Neuro-Inspired Robots*, ed. Paola Arena (Newyork: Springer, 2010), 3.

<sup>17</sup> Deliağnia, "Overview of Motor Systems. Types of Movements: Reflexes, Rhythmical and Voluntary Movements", 3-4.

<sup>18</sup> VandenBos, "APA Dictionary of Psychology", 953.

<sup>19</sup> VandenBos, "APA Dictionary of Psychology", 953.

<sup>20</sup> Charles Duhigg, *Alışkanlıkların Gücü*, çev. Handan Balkara Çevikus (İstanbul: Boyner Yayınları, 2012), 21.

<sup>21</sup> Orhan Hançerlioğlu, *Ruhbilim Sözlüğü* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1988), 38.

<sup>22</sup> Başgil, *Gençlerle Başbaşa*, 30.

<sup>23</sup> Payot, *İrade Terbiyesi*, 136-138.

<sup>24</sup> Rasim Özdenören, *Yumurtayı Hangi Ucundan Kırmalı* (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2016), 95.

<sup>25</sup> Ragıp el-İsfahani, ed. Safvab Adnan Davudi, *Müfredatu Elfazi'l-Kur'an*, (Beyrut: Darü'ş-Şamiyye, 2002), 474.

returns to the individual as negative emotions such as a sense of powerlessness, inadequacy, boredom, and distancing from oneself. The existential integrity of the individual needs to reveal his/her potential, use his/her abilities, and transform them into action.<sup>26</sup> In other words, thoughts and talents without action are hidden powers that cannot be revealed. Even the smallest actions of the individual are preliminary accumulations in terms of producing great products or achieving great success.<sup>27</sup>

One of the factors that strengthen willpower is considered to be being active or working. Being active means being alive, being vigorous. Active work also means working with the awareness of how the individual can organize, manage, evaluate, and get efficiency from himself/herself and his/her life. Thus, the individual plans his/her time correctly, manages himself/herself most efficiently, and performs his/her work with desire and enthusiasm.<sup>28</sup> Islamic literature classifies action and good deeds into two parts: deeds and righteous deeds. There is a difference between work and useful work. Amal is defined as the purposeful work of a living being.<sup>29</sup> Righteous deeds, on the other hand, are actions done with the sake of Allah in mind. In righteous deeds, one acts consciously.<sup>30</sup> Active work prevents negative actions that do not lead to results, such as laziness, procrastination, and procrastination. It weakens the power of emotions and thoughts that cause these negative actions on the individual.<sup>31</sup> Another factor that strengthens willpower is to be stable. Stability, which comes from the root of a decision in Arabic, means to decide one place, to be determined in something.<sup>32</sup> Being stable means showing continuity in work by focusing on the goal instead of working scattered and inefficiently. To work steadily and make an effort is not to stop working with perseverance and determination until you see the product, such as a seed turning into a flower or a tree.<sup>33</sup>

54 In Islamic literature, tawakkul is recognized as the last link of will and determination. Will is the essential element of willpower. Ambition refers to a process consisting of four stages: thinking about the goal, designing and discussing it in the mind, decision-making and implementation. To achieve a goal, willpower, perseverance, and patience are the primary actions. Azm, which means determination in willpower, means being determined in the continuity of work. In Islamic literature, it is necessary to have tawakkul after showing willpower and determination in the realization of an action towards a goal. This is because tawakkul is trusting in Allah through active work rather than passive waiting. In Islam's understanding of tawakkul, there is no understanding of exhibiting an unwilling and indecisive attitude.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, instead of acting passively and involuntarily in achieving a goal, Islam recommends working decisively by using the will.

The last of the factors that strengthen the will is considered to be the acquisition of the environment. Social environment refers to the physical, cultural, and social conditions that shape the lives of individuals and communities. People are affected positively or negatively by the people around them.<sup>35</sup> According to social learning theory, behavior is learned through observation, imitation, and modeling. Individuals are influenced by three types of models in their environment: live models, symbolic models, and verbal expressions. The real person who performs any behavior is the live model, people who are watched on screens such as television, cinema, and social media or described in symbols in texts such as books, newspapers, and magazines are the symbolic model, and verbal expressions that express how to behave in any situation are the verbal model.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, people in the social environment serve as models for children. Adults, on the other hand, are influenced by the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of the people around them. In the first stage, the role models for children are their parents. Therefore, children first imitate

<sup>26</sup> Erich Fromm, *Kendini Savunan İnsan*, çev. Necla Arat (İstanbul: Say Yayınları, 1998), 212-213.

<sup>27</sup> Payot, *İrade Terbiyesi*, 71.

<sup>28</sup> Payot, *İrade Terbiyesi*, 153-155.

<sup>29</sup> Ragıp el-İsfahani, *Müfredatu Elfazi'l-Kur'an*, 660.

<sup>30</sup> Muammer Erbaş, "Dünya ve Ahiret Mutluluğunun Yolu: Amel-i Salih", *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*, (2018), 34.

<sup>31</sup> Payot, *İrade Terbiyesi*, 52.

<sup>32</sup> Ragıp el-İsfahani, *Müfredatu Elfazi'l-Kur'an*, 662.

<sup>33</sup> Payot, *İrade Terbiyesi*, 157-159.

<sup>34</sup> Hayati Aydın, "Kur'an'da İrade-Azm Ve Tevekkül", *Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 8/3 (2008), 61-63.

<sup>35</sup> Bharat Dhiman, "How Social Environment Influences People's Behavior: A Critical Review", *SSRN* 1-12 (2023), 2.

<sup>36</sup> Albert Bandura, *Social Learning Theory* (New York City: General Learning Press, 1971), 6-7; Anthony Artino, "Bandura, Ross, and Ross: Observational Learning and the Bobo Doll", *Online Submission* (2007), 4-6.

their parents and then the people around them. In addition, there are social media influencers and influencers as role models today and they play an important role in strengthening or weakening the will. Therefore, deep thought, action, being active, being stable, and acquiring the right environment are factors that strengthen willpower.

## 2.2. Factors Contributing to the Weakening of Willpower

Some factors strengthen willpower as well as factors that weaken it. Factors that weaken willpower are classified under the headings of impulsivity, passion, aimlessness, laziness, and indecision. Impulsivity is defined as behaviors that are inappropriate for the environment or excessively risky, not planned properly and sufficiently, and often lead to undesirable consequences. In the case of impulsivity, there are some reasons such as carelessness, impatience, getting bored quickly, seeking novelty, desire for excitement and pleasure, taking risks, and not thinking about the possibility of harm.<sup>37</sup> One of the factors that weaken willpower is passion. Passion is defined as an intense or irresistible emotion or a very strong desire for something.<sup>38</sup> Passion is classified under two headings: compatible and obsessive. The passion that arises from the internalization of what the person loves and leads the individual to participate in the activity they love is called "compatible passion". Harmonious passions are the type of passion that expresses the state of loving a little more, wanting more, and that the individual can control himself/herself. "Obsessive passions" are impulsive desires and demands that the individual cannot control himself/herself. So much so that the individual exhibits behaviors that are prisoners of their passions and behaviors that are captive to their passions.<sup>39</sup> When obsessive passions become indispensable for the individual, it causes a weakening of willpower.

Another factor that weakens the will is aimlessness. Aim is defined as the desired result, and purpose.<sup>40</sup> Purposelessness means not determining a goal to be achieved. Accompanying the concept of meaning, purpose includes three concepts: goal, intention, and functionality.<sup>41</sup> Today, beauty is separated from sublimity, everything is presented on digital platforms, the human body and objects are shown in a pornographic way, and everything in the world is reduced to matter, far from the metaphysical dimension. Thus, the goal is built on obtaining material pleasures.<sup>42</sup> Laziness, which is one of the factors that negatively affect willpower, is the name given to the situation where a person does not show or make an effort even though he/she can perform as expected or as he/she should.<sup>43</sup> Studies show that people are lazy in education, career, and family. Individuals generally procrastinate on issues such as not completing their education, not performing well in the educational process or their professional work, not having a better career, not spending more time with their families, and getting married too late, they state that they are uncomfortable with this situation.<sup>44</sup> To get away from the problem of laziness and procrastination, it is necessary to get away from the factors that cause laziness and procrastination. One should also get away from friends and entertainment which will lead to laziness. In other words, not only the disease but also the factors that lead to the disease should be avoided.<sup>45</sup>

The last factor that causes the weakening of the will is recognized as indecision. Indecisiveness refers to the situation in which the voodoo causes the person not to reach the result in his/her intention and action. To decide is to come to a certain level after various searches, to choose something. Indecision, on the other hand, is hesitating and not being able to choose.<sup>46</sup> Individuals cannot set goals and make choices due to indecision such as "Should it be this or that?", "Should I do this or that?".<sup>47</sup> Indecision is evaluated in two

<sup>37</sup> Pınar Güzel Özdemir vd., "Dürtüsellik Tedavisi", *Psikiyatride Güncel Yaklaşımlar* 4/3 (2012), 294.

<sup>38</sup> VandenBos, "APA Dictionary of Psychology", 766.

<sup>39</sup> Robert J. Vallerand, "On the Psychology of Passion: In Search of What Makes People's Lives Most Worth Living", *Canadian Psychology* 49/1 (2008), 1.

<sup>40</sup> Şükrü Haluk Akalın, "Sözcük Bilimi ve Sözlükçülük", *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi* XCIII/698 (2010), 110.

<sup>41</sup> İrvin Yalom, *Varoluşçu Psikoterapi*, çev. Zeliha İyidoğan Babayiğit (İstanbul: Kılbalcı Yayınları, 1999), 662.

<sup>42</sup> Byung-Chul Han, *Güzel Kurtarmak*, çev. Kadir Filiz (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2020), 15-18.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Madsen, "The Conception of Laziness and the Characterisation of Others as Lazy", *Human Arenas* 1 (2018), 288.

<sup>44</sup> Daniel T. Gilbert et al., "Looking Forward to Looking Backward: The Misprediction of Regret", *Psychol Science* 15/5 (2004), 382.

<sup>45</sup> Bakar, *İrade Terbiyesi*, 138.

<sup>46</sup> D. Mehmet Doğan, *Doğan Büyük Türkçe Sözlük*, (Ankara: Yazar Yayınları 23/2011), 713-714.

<sup>47</sup> Gilbert et al., "Looking Forward to Looking Backward: The Misprediction of Regret", 382.

parts: developmental indecision and decision-making difficulties. Developmental ambivalence is considered a normal stage of vocational decision-making; this ambivalence is the result of both identity and career exploration and is a natural process. Decision-making difficulties or indecision is a general inability to make decisions in all areas of life. Indecision becomes functional as a result of the individual's continuous inability to make decisions. Research shows that indecisive individuals experience many negative situations, including high levels of anxiety, low self-esteem, and decreased decision-making capacity.<sup>48</sup> Indecision is a state of hesitation in deciding the case of desiring to do the best or have the best of something or in case of avoiding responsibility. Thus, the actions that strengthen the will are evaluated under five headings: deep thought, action, being active, being stable, and acquiring the right environment, while the factors that weaken the will are evaluated under the headings of impulsivity, passion, aimlessness, laziness, and indecision. It is important to support children to strengthen their willpower from early childhood. Because the strong willpower acquired in early childhood also manifests itself in adulthood. Precautions should be taken in early childhood against situations that weaken the will such as impulsivity, passion, and laziness.

### 3. Early Childhood and Value Acquisition in the Context of Willpower Education

Early childhood is the period during which children develop their awareness and acquire fundamental values and behaviors. It is during this process that basic values are formed in children.<sup>49</sup> The importance of willpower training is significant in the acquisition of these fundamental values.

#### 3.1. Early Childhood and Value Education

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The period from birth or the mother's pregnancy until the first years of primary education is defined as "early childhood" and is considered to be the period when development is the fastest and the environment is the most effective. Experiences, acquired behaviors, and habits in the first six years of childhood constitute the dynamics of life perspective and behavior patterns in later periods.<sup>50</sup> Early childhood is a period in which the child develops in many areas including cognitive, emotional, social, cultural, and moral development. In this period, it has an important role in the acquisition of the child's skills of self-understanding, perception, self-expression, and making discoveries. In this period, children should be prepared for life, supported in becoming good individuals and acquiring moral values. Studies show that ½ of children's mental development occurs at the age of four, 30% between the ages of four and eight, and 20% between the ages of eight and seventeen. It is accepted that 30% of their academic achievements until the age of eighteen are gained in the first six years.<sup>51</sup>

Early childhood is the period when children's cognitive, affective, and behavioral development is at its peak. In this period, affective motor schemas emerge in three successive forms, and the emerging schemas change with the formation of later schemas. The first forms consist of "rhythm structures" that can be observed in the instantaneous and global movements of the organism. It mostly refers to reflex structures. The second form is recognized as various "arrangements" that differentiate the initial rhythms according to multiple schemas. The most common of these arrangements is the groping of the first habits and the first dynamics of intelligence in early childhood. The third clarifies the onset of reversibility. In this way, the dynamics of the imaginative construction of future actions are determined.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, from early childhood, children acquire certain behavior patterns and behave according to the behavior forms they acquire. Likewise, children who acquire value-based behavior forms make these behaviors a habit in later years.

The first environment where value education will be acquired is the family environment. The value emphasis of parents in the family and their actions is important for children's value acquisition. So much so

<sup>48</sup> Paulo Jorge Santos - Carlos Gonçalves, "A Kohutian Approach to Indecisiveness", *Análise Psicológica* 35/3 (2017), 339.

<sup>49</sup> Kirsten Ellis-K. Blashki, "Toddler Techies: A Study of Young Children's Interaction with Computers", *Information Technology in Childhood Education*, 1 (2004), 77.

<sup>50</sup> Gülaçtı, "Erken Çocukluk Eğitimi", 2.

<sup>51</sup> Akif Akto - Semra Akto, "Erken Çocukluk ve Değerler Eğitimi", *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 13/74 (2020), 328.

<sup>52</sup> Jean Piaget - Barbel Inhelder, *The Psychology of the Child* (New York: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, 1969), 19-20.



that there is a relationship between a child's level of attachment to his/her family and the level of value acquisition and learning rules. Parental modeling in value acquisition is effective in the formation and habit formation of behavior.<sup>53</sup> Parents are the primary role models for children. In this regard, Salzman's story about the mother being a role model is a good metaphor. In the story, when the mother crab walks with her child and asks when he will learn to walk correctly, the baby crab tells his mother that he learned to walk from her. The baby crab also states that he has never seen his mother walking the way she wants him to walk. This metaphorical expression reveals how children are influenced by their parents.<sup>54</sup> Parents should also emphasize the right actions to provide valuable education to their children. Just as children form the foundations of practical intelligence through the eye and ear,<sup>55</sup> they also acquire values through these means.

It is known that children's mental perceptions are not clear in early childhood and that the learning process is influenced by sounds rather than thoughts. Therefore, the fact that even subjects such as grammatical theories are taught in artistic activities in early childhood<sup>56</sup> shows that value acquisition can be taught in the same way. All acquisitions to be gained in early childhood should be given by the developmental levels of children. Activities such as telling stories about values, playing games, producing digital games, puppet shows, acting out stories about values, painting and art activities,<sup>57</sup> experiments and drama activities are factors that help the acquisition of values in early childhood. Therefore, early childhood is a period in which the seeds of behavioral patterns are sown. Will education is the activity of taming the seeds of ideas. An idea is a seed and becomes a huge tree where it is planted. It is easier to prevent the planting of the seed without uprooting the tree or to plant the right seed.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, it is understood that the values and correct behavior forms acquired in early childhood are the determinants of children's future behaviors. More importance should be given to the early childhood period for children's value acquisition. 57

### 3.2. The Function of Will Education in Value Acquisition

Will training is an important activity for children to gain many skills such as planning their lives correctly, developing self-management, and self-regulation skills, and being decisive in their decisions. This education supports doing the actions that should be done and not doing the actions that should not be done. Being able to stay away from something one is inclined to do even though it is harmful or postponing an action that should be postponed reflects willpower training. The "Marshmallow Test" or "Pleasure Delay Test Skill" experiment conducted on willpower training reveals how important willpower is. The Marshmallow Test, which was conducted in the 1960s, is a test designed to measure children's self-control skills and their ability to manage their emotions. This test was applied to more than 550 children and important results were obtained. In the experiment, it was observed how children who were able to use their willpower were able to control themselves and how they responded correctly despite all the distractors. The Marshmallow test is an experiment designed to test the willpower of children aged 4-6 years at Stanford University's Bing Kindergarten.<sup>59</sup>

Preschool children were taken to a room called the "Surprise Room". In this room, treats such as candies, crackers, and cookies that children like were placed on the table. There was also a tablebell next to the treats on the table. After the children entered the surprise room, the observer told the children that she was leaving because she had work outside. She also added that they would have to wait for her for 20 minutes. The observer informed the children that they should press the bell when they wanted to call her or when they decided to eat the candy or cookies. She also told the children that if they did not press the bell until she arrived and did not eat the treat on the table, they would get another candy or another cookie as a reward. Thus, the children were given two options: they could eat one candy or one cookie immediately, and they could earn two candies or two cookies by waiting and not eating the candy or cookie. After explaining

<sup>53</sup> Lee A. Kirkpatrick, *Din Psikolojisinde Bağlanma Teorisi*, çev. Mustafa Koç, *Bilimname: Düşünce Platformu* 10 (2006), 160-161.

<sup>54</sup> Christian Gotthilf Salzman, *Yengeç Kitap Çocukları Kötü Yetiştirilenin Yolları* (İstanbul: Zafer Yayınları, 2004), 15-16.

<sup>55</sup> Jean Piaget, *Çocuklukta Zihinsel Gelişim*, çev. Hasan Portakal (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1999), 20-23.

<sup>56</sup> Thomas Martin, "The Characters of Childhood", *The Child*, ed. William Kessen - George Meodler (London: John Wiley & Sons Inc, 1967), 34.

<sup>57</sup> Donald Ratcliff - Brenda Ratcliff, *ChildFaith: Experiencing God and Spiritual Growth with Your Children* (Oregon: Wipf & Stock Pub., 2010), 83-103.

<sup>58</sup> Bakar, *İrade Terbiyesi*, 128.

<sup>59</sup> Walter Mischel, *Marshmallow Testi*, çev. Arış Satılmış (İstanbul: Pegasus Yayınları, 2016), 12-31.

the rules in detail, the observer went out of the surprise room and started to watch the children through the window at the door of the room.

Some of the children immediately pressed the buzzer and chose to eat the candy or cookie in their hands. Others preferred not to eat the candy to get their reward. It was even observed that they made great efforts not to eat the candy or cookie in front of them. Some children closed their eyes to avoid seeing the candies, while others tried to fill the 20 minutes by singing songs. At the end of the experiment, the children who controlled themselves for 20 minutes and did not eat the treat won the prize. After this experiment, the children who participated in the experiment were observed for a long time. What these children did, which schools they attended, and their achievement levels were monitored. As a result of the research, it was observed that children who could delay gratification and use their willpower scored better on exams, were more academically successful, had stronger personalities, had higher self-esteem, were more decisive, could focus better, coped better with disappointments and stress, and had less risk of addictions such as alcohol and heroin than those who could not delay gratification and had difficulty in using their willpower.<sup>60</sup>

Children need to be given willpower education from early childhood. Willpower training is important for children to develop the habit of not acting instinctively but thinking about the consequences of their words and actions. Children who do not receive this training, whose every desire is whenever they want, become prisoners of their instincts as they grow up instead of being in control of their instincts. Instinctive desires and wishes become stronger as they are constantly tried to be done. So much so that the individual becomes a slave to his/her low desires. The person becomes unable to distinguish between moral actions such as virtue, goodness, and truth, and immoral actions such as evil and lies.<sup>61</sup> At this stage, willpower training is important in learning to choose the right behavior. Because wrong conceptions in the mind create automatic thoughts, and automatic thoughts turn into automatic behaviors. It is important to break this cycle and choose the right value-based behavior.<sup>62</sup> In this context, to be able to choose between impulse and reaction, developing the ability to make behavioral choices by imagining different reactions rather than reacting reactively, that is, according to the effect, is an activity that makes the will strong. This activity makes it easier to react correctly.<sup>63</sup> Mental and behavioral activities for value-based behavior selection in behavior selection are included in willpower training.

It should be noted that there are critics of the Marshmallow Test. A study conducted in 2012 demonstrates that the performance of young children in self-control tasks may be influenced not only by their self-control capacities but also by their beliefs about the reliability of the environment. The study found that children waited twice as long in reliable conditions in the Marshmallow experiment. The findings of the study highlight the necessity of considering not only children's self-control abilities but also their beliefs about the reliability of the world to understand and evaluate their behaviors and responses.<sup>64</sup> Another study on behavioral reward and delay habits shows that self-discipline plays a significant role in children's success and their ability to exercise self-control.<sup>65</sup> Willpower education an individual's ability to regulate themselves, focus on their tasks, and achieve success in many areas of life. Most importantly, it contributes to personal development and supports success across a broad spectrum of human life.<sup>66</sup> In addition studies on the neurobiology of the interaction between emotional and cognitive domains suggest that success in emotion regulation and self-control plays a foundational role in the development of cognitive skills that are crucial for early success in school.<sup>67</sup> At the same time, it is observed that strengthening willpower from early

<sup>60</sup> Mischel, *Marshmallow Testi*, 12-31.

<sup>61</sup> Bakar, *İrade Terbiyesi*, 198.

<sup>62</sup> David Burns, *İyi Hissetmek*, çev. Esra Tuncer (İstanbul: Psikonet Yayınları, 2018), 51-55.

<sup>63</sup> Stephen R. Covey, *Etkili İnsanların 7 Alışkanlığı*, çev. Gönül Suveren - Osman Deniztekin (İstanbul: Varlık Yayınları, 2002), 68.

<sup>64</sup> Celeste Kidd et al., "Rational Snacking: Young Children's Decision-Making on the Marshmallow Task is Moderated by Beliefs about Environmental Reliability", *Cognition* 126/1 (2012), 113.

<sup>65</sup> Angela Duckworth-Martin E.P. Seligman, "Self-Discipline Outdoes IQ in Predicting Academic Performance of Adolescents", *Psychological Science* 16/12(2006), 939-340.

<sup>66</sup> Roy Baumeister et al., "The Strength Model of Self-Control", *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 16/6 (2007), 353-354.

<sup>67</sup> Nancy Eisenberg et al., "Self-Regulation and School Readiness", *Early Education and Development* 21/5(2010), 696-697.

childhood also prevents children from veering off course.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, while children's self-control behavior is important, it is also understood that the reliability of the environment is crucial for children.

Will education is an education aimed at helping the child to control himself/herself, to act voluntarily, and to understand that it is harmful to him/her to do whatever he/she wants against his/her will. In his book "Emile", Rousseau states that the way to teach a child to be weak-willed and unhappy is to do whatever the child wants and explains the subject as follows: "Do you know the surest way to make your child unhappy? To accustom him to obtain everything; because his desires, which are easy to satisfy, are constantly increasing, sooner or later, in the face of impossibility, you will inevitably have to refuse these desires, and this unaccustomed refusal will upset him more than the deprivation of what he desires. First, he will want the cane in your hand, soon he will want your watch, then the flying bird, the star he sees shining, and everything else he can see! You are not God, how can you please him?".<sup>69</sup> Therefore, allowing children to do whatever they want is to take away their freedom of will. Thus, willpower education is important in the acquisition of values such as respect, empathy, patience, and tolerance. While willpower education is given in the acquisition of values, it should be given following the level of children.

As a result, it is necessary to carry out activities to strengthen willpower in early childhood. Achieving goals, self-discipline, self-control, academic success, success in relationships, adopting healthy habits, being productive, and gaining values such as respect, empathy, and tolerance positively affect many areas in the lives of many individuals. On the other hand, weak willpower negatively affects individuals' lives. Strengthening willpower is an activity that helps individuals develop themselves, focus on their goals, and lead a more fulfilling life. Gaining this cognitive activity in early childhood is important in forming value-based behavioral habits in youth and adulthood.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Willpower training is important in determining the limits of the individual, self-control, self-discipline, and self-control. Willpower represents an internal mechanism that expresses an individual's basic abilities such as achieving goals, determination, long-term thinking, and emotional control. This training is a training for the individual to activate his/her inner powers such as delaying gratification, resisting distracting impulses, and showing determination. Early childhood is a critical stage in an individual's life where basic behavior patterns and values are formed. Providing willpower education in this period helps the child develop emotional and social skills, contribute to the acquisition of values, and strengthen the ability to focus on long-term goals. The behaviors acquired in early childhood affect and shape an individual's life perspective and behavior patterns in the following years. Early childhood is a period of rapid cognitive, emotional, social, cultural, and moral development and is an important stage in which children gain the skills to understand and express themselves and explore their environment. Will education in early childhood have long-term effects on an individual's life? This education is a skill that can shape and develop an individual's inner strengths.

Value acquisition in early childhood takes place primarily in the family environment. The role of parents in modeling and emphasizing the right behaviors to their children is of great importance. Emphasizing values within the family affects children's value acquisition and the level of learning rules. From this point of view, educators, families, and societies support individuals to develop a more robust internal guidance mechanism in their lives by giving more importance to willpower education. One of the major problems faced in today's societies is the weakening of individuals' willpower. In the so-called age of pleasure and speed, the constant flow of visuals, activities on social media and activities focused on pleasure push individuals away from self-control, negatively affecting their patience and ability to concentrate on a goal, and pushing them to impulsive behaviors. In this context, pleasures, entertainment, games, and activities aimed at watching the lives of others are effective in determining individuals' priorities. Attitudes

<sup>68</sup> Alexander T. Vazsonyi-Li Huang, "Where Self-Control Comes From: On the Development of Self-Control and Its Relationship to Deviance Over Time", *Developmental Psychology* 46/1(2010), 245.

<sup>69</sup> Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, çev. Yaşar Avunç (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2013), 82.

towards pleasure can lead to an increase in addictions in many areas, making individuals prisoners to their instincts. Therefore, children need to have a strong will to adapt to today's challenging conditions more effectively, gain value, and improve their quality of life, and there is a need to increase family activities and preschool activities in this regard.

As a result, many studies can be conducted on willpower education for value acquisition. Long-term projects and activities can be organized in the family and school environment by using the learning-by-living model. Families and educators must take an active role in this process, helping individuals build a solid internal guidance mechanism in their lives.

### Activity Suggestions to Strengthen Willpower in Early Childhood

There are many activities to be done as family and school activities on willpower education, which is effective in the acquisition of many values such as respect, patience, honesty, and empathy. Families and educators have important roles in activating willpower. Many activities such as games, experiments, and drama can be done at home and at school to develop willpower.

• **1. Activity:** Role-playing activities can be done at home or school. When asked about food on the table, "The dessert on the table looks delicious. But since my stomach is full, it would be better if I eat it in the evening, not now." or "I shouldn't eat this dessert even though I want to. Because it harms my health." How to use willpower can be taught by experiencing it. Breathing exercises can be practiced as a family and classroom activity. By practicing breathing exercises before reacting to events with breathing exercises training, the ability to act patiently and choose behavior without succumbing to anger can be developed. In addition, behavior selection exercises can be done. An activity called "I Choose the Right Behavior" can be done by using visuals describing the right behavior and wrong behavior in a subject. Visuals are pasted or pictures are drawn on a cardboard or a piece of paper so that behaviors expressing values such as honesty, helpfulness, respect, and wrong behaviors are side by side. Then a short story about the subject is told and the child is asked to choose the right behavior. The child explains why and how he/she chose the right behavior. The child is also asked to explain what the consequences of the wrong behavior would have been if he/she had chosen the wrong behavior. In this way, the importance of choosing a behavior is emphasized.

• **2. Activity:** Live activities can be done using the learning-by-doing model. For example, activities such as making cookies, raising a kitten or growing flowers can be done over a long period. Every day, children observe the formation of flowers on the soil. At certain stages of the flower-growing activity, children are given some instructions. The children are told to imagine what a beautiful flower they will get at the end of waiting patiently. At each stage of the flower, children are asked to express their feelings. The challenges and rewards of patience are discussed. When the flower is fully grown, the experiment is evaluated with the children. The joy of waiting patiently and obtaining a beautiful flower at the end of the labor is discussed. The children discuss whether the goal can be achieved if they are in a hurry or not patient while carrying out these activities. In this way, value acquisition is supported with willpower education activities in early childhood.

• **3. Activity:** Games can be played about willpower. For example, the game "I Froze" can be played. The parents or the child can be the leader in the game. Before the game is played, lively music is selected and while the music is playing, everyone plays as they wish. As soon as the leader says "I'm frozen!", everyone stops immediately. They wait for a few seconds without moving. If one of the players moves, they are out of the game. When the chosen leader of the game calls out "Move", everyone starts to move. When everyone is moving the most and focusing the most on the music, the leader says "I'm frozen" and all the players go back to a still position. When the call "I'm frozen" is made, those who cannot stand still and move leave the game. In this way, children learn to control themselves in a situation where they need to stop.<sup>70</sup>

• **4. Activity:** The game "Heroes of Will" can be played with children. This game allows children to strengthen their willpower and support each other in a fun atmosphere. In addition, the "Hero of Will

<sup>70</sup> Handan Yalvaç Arıcı, *Kur'an'da Anne Baba Okulu* (İstanbul: Nesil Yayıncılık, 2022), 213.

Powers" badges earned can inspire children to use their willpower in their daily lives. Each child receives a sheet of cardboard. The children use the colored paper to design the willpower hero of their choice. The children choose the names of their heroes, write the names of their heroes on the paper, and draw their powers. The playing field is marked with colored tape. Each color represents a value. For example, blue represents helpfulness, red represents patience, and green represents determination. Two dice are used in the game. One die represents the colors on the playing field. The other die determines the willpower task to be performed. Willpower actions such as "stand on one leg", and "jump 5 times" are determined. Each child takes turns rolling the dice and determines the color and the willpower task. Children perform the task on the appropriate colored tape in the playground. Children who complete the task earn "Willpower Hero Power" in the next round. After each successful task, children add willpower to each other to make their willpower heroes stronger. For example, a child who completes the patience task earns a "Patience Power" badge, which can help with the next task. The game ends in a set number of rounds or at the children's request. The child who collects the most "Willpower Hero Power" wins the title of "Willpower Hero". In this way, children can use their willpower to feel values such as patience and helpfulness through the game.

**5. Activity:** Dramas can be made with children about using willpower in value acquisition. The drama "I Do What I Want!" shows children the wrongness of doing whatever they want. An activity that children can do together is prepared and everyone is given a task. One child says "I'll do whatever I want!" and does not do his/her task while the other children are doing their activities. At that moment, he/she feels like sleeping, so he/she goes to sleep, or he/she feels like reading a joke, so he/she reads a joke and starts laughing. In short, they prefer to do what they feel like doing while participating in activities. After the children finish their activities, they talk about how they feel about the child who does whatever he/she wants and does not fulfill his/her responsibilities. At the same time, they express what kind of problems there were in their work. In addition, the child who does not fulfill his/her responsibility tells how he/she feels and how it feels to prevent his/her friends from working when he/she does not do his/her duty. Thus, the importance of doing a task responsibly is emphasized.

## Erken Çocuklukta İrade Eğitiminin Değer Kazanımı Bağlamında Değerlendirilmesi

**Atf:** Yalvaç Arıcı, Handan. "Erken Çocuklukta İrade Eğitiminin Değer Kazanımı Bağlamında Değerlendirilmesi", *Artuklu Akademi* 11/1 (Haziran 2024), 49-65. <https://doi.org/10.34247/artukluakademi.1466721>

### Genişletilmiş Özet

İrade bir hedefe ulaşmada erteleme davranışının üstesinden gelme, bir amaç için kararlı olma, uzun vadeli sonuçlara göre karar verme gibi insana dair önemli bir gücü ifade etmektedir. Bireylerin fitri olarak bazı davranışları iradeli, bazı davranışları iradesiz ve bazısı da iradeyle şekillenen davranışlardır. İradeli davranışlar; istemli hareketleri ifade etmektedir. İradesiz veya otomatik hareketler herhangi bir durumda tepki olarak meydana gelen istemsiz refleksler ve ritmik hareketleri ifade etmektedir. Buna mukabil içgüdü, alışkanlık ve telkin iradeyle şekillenen davranışlardır. İrade kullanıldıkça güçlenen ve bireyi güçlü kılan kas yapısına benzemektedir. Öyle ki bireylerin kendilerini kontrol edebilmeleri, planlayabilmeleri ve uzun vadeli istekleri kısa vadeli isteklere tercih etmeyecek kadar güçlü olabilmeleri irade vasıtasıyla mümkün olmaktadır. İradeyi derin düşünce, eylem, aktif olma, istikrarlı olma ve doğru çevre edinimi olmak üzere beş unsurun güçlendirdiği, buna mukabil dürtüsellik, tutku, amaçsızlık, tembellik ve kararsızlık olmak üzere beş unsurun da zayıflattığı kabul edilmektedir. Dolayısıyla bireyler yaratılış itibarıyla bazı davranışları otomatik olarak bazılarını ise irade ile yapmaktadırlar. İradenin bireylerin kendilerini kontrol etmelerinin yanı sıra doğru davranış kalıplarını benimseme ve değer edinimi açısından önemli fonksiyonları bulunmaktadır.

Erken çocukluk doğumdan ya da annenin hamileliğinden ilköğretimin ilk yıllarına kadar olan dönem olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bu dönem insan hayatında gelişimin en hızlı ve çevrenin en etkili olduğu bir süreçtir. Çocukluk döneminin ilk altı yılındaki yaşantılar, edinilmiş olan davranış ve alışkanlıklar daha sonraki dönemlerde hayat perspektifi ve davranış kalıplarının alt dinamiklerini oluşturmaktadır. Bir başka ifadeyle erken çocukluk itibarıyla çocuklar belirli davranış kalıpları edinmekte ve edindikleri davranış kalıplarına göre davranmaktadırlar. Böylelikle doğru ya da yanlış herhangi bir davranışı edinen çocuklar daha sonraki yıllarda bu davranışları alışkanlık hâline getirmektedirler. Erken çocukluk döneminde çocuğun bilişsel, duygusal, sosyal, kültürel ve ahlaki olmak üzere birçok alanda gelişimi bulunmaktadır. Bu dönemde çocukların hayata hazırlanması, iyi bir birey olma ve ahlaki değerleri edinmede desteklenmeleri gerekmektedir. İrade eğitimi, çocuğun kendi istekleri ve hedefleri doğrultusunda kararlar alabilme, sorumluluk alabilme, iç ve dış motivasyonu yönetebilme gibi becerileri içermektedir. Çocukların öz-denetim, öz-düzenleme gibi becerileri geliştirmeleri ve sabır, hoşgörü, saygı, empati gibi değer kazanımları açısından irade eğitimi önemlidir.

İrade eğitiminin verileceği ilk ortam aile ortamıdır. Anne babanın aile içerisinde ve eylemlerinde iradeli davranışları önem arz etmektedir. Bir çocuğun ailesine bağlanma düzeyi ile kuralları öğrenme düzeyi arasında ilişki bulunmaktadır. İrade eğitiminde ebeveyni model alma iradenin kullanımı ve güçlenmesi açısından etkilidir. Örneğin bir anne yememesi gereken bir yiyeceği "Bu yiyeceği yememeliyim" diyerek kendisini kontrol ettiğini ifade etmekle çocuğuna iradeyi kullanma konusunda örnek teşkil etmektedir. Aynı şekilde çocuğun her arzusunu yerine getirmekten ziyade o arzusunun gerekli olup olmadığı ve bazen beklenmesi gerektiği vurgulanmalıdır. Ayrıca evde iradenin güçlendirilmesine yönelik oyun, drama, deney gibi faaliyetlerle çocuğun iradesini kullanmasına imkân verilmez. Böylelikle çocuklar ev ortamında irade eğitimine yönelik çalışmalarla öz-denetim becerilerini geliştirmiş olacaklardır.

Teknoloji ile birlikte küreselleşen dünyamızda, bireyler kolayca birbirleriyle iletişim kurabilmekte ve tüketim odaklı bir yaşam tarzını benimsemektedir. Haz ve hız çağının tüketim endeksli hayat tarzından çocuklar da etkilenmekte; ebeveynlerin çocuklarının mutluluğu için sürekli istek ve taleplerini yerine getirmeleri, teknolojik aletlerin başında uzun süre geçirmelerine izin vermeleri sonucunda çocuklarda sürekli isteme, hız eğilimi, zevk alma ve eğlenme eğilimleri artmaktadır. Teknolojinin ve tüketim odaklı yaşam tarzının baskın olduğu günümüzde, bireylerin irade gücünü korumak ve güçlendirmek, sürdürülebilir bir yaşam tarzını benimsemek açısından hayati bir önem taşımaktadır. Teknolojinin çocuklara sunduğu oyunlar, eğlenceli ve akış hâlindeki görseller günümüz çocuğunun canının sıkılmasına, yavaşlığa ve sabır göstermesine imkân vermemektedir. Bu bağlamda, irade eğitimi çocukların içsel güçlerini etkin bir şekilde kullanmaya teşvik ederek, zorlayıcı koşullara daha etkili bir şekilde adapte olmalarına ve yaşam kalitelerini artırmalarına yardımcı olabilecek bir eğitimidir. Aynı zamanda dürüstlük, sabır, empati gibi birçok değer kazanımında önem arz etmektedir. Böylelikle iradesini kullanmayı öğrenen çocuğun yalan söylemeyip dürüst davranma, sabırsız davranmayıp vazgeçmeme, diğerlerini anlayarak iletişim becerilerini geliştirme gibi konularda da kazanımı olmaktadır. Ayrıca çocukların bir konuya odaklanmaları, kendilerini düzenleyebilme ve planlayabilmeleri konularında önemli bir rol oynamaktadır.

Sonuç itibarıyla değer kazanımında irade eğitiminin önemli bir rolü bulunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda erken çocukluk döneminde irade eğitimi kapsamında değerlerin kazanımına yönelik birçok faaliyet yapılabilmektedir. Çocukların kişiliklerinin geliştiği, davranış kalıplarının oluştuğu erken çocuklukta öz-denetim, öz-düzenleme gibi becerilerin zemini olan iradeyi kullanabilme edinimi ve değer kazanımı konusunda çocukların desteklenmeleri gerekmektedir. Bu

çalışmada erken çocukluk döneminde irade eğitimi ve irade eğitimi bünyesinde kazanılan değerlerden bahsedilmekte, bu dönemde irade eğitimi ile ilgili gerçekleştirilebilecek oyun, drama, deney gibi faaliyetlere örnekler verilmektedir. Dolayısıyla çocukların hayatın ilk yıllarında aldıkları irade eğitimi daha sonraki yıllarda iradelerini kullanma ve değer kazanımı açısından önemli bir faaliyettir.

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