

## Research Article

# Honesty and Empathy Character-building Training for Children Under Care of Foster Parents

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**Abstract.**

SOS Childrens Villages is a non-profit, non-governmental social organization that actively supports childrens rights, namely a loving family and home. In this case, SOS Childrens Villages is committed to providing shelter and care for children who have or are at risk of losing their parental care. To increase the ability of foster parents, it is necessary to provide further training on improving parenting skills about honesty and empathy to foster parents through roleplay and case examples. A focused group discussion was conducted to collect the data from 12 foster parents. The results of this training were effective where foster parents have succeeded in increasing their knowledge and skills in applying the values of honesty and empathy. The suggestion in this study is that it can be held offline so it will be easier for parents to understand the material. For the next collaboration, the training will be discussed in more depth what underlies the honesty or openness of children and empathy for children.

**Keywords:** honesty, empathy, children, SOS children village

## 1. Introduction

According to Lickona (1991), there are 10 signs of the times to watch out for, including: (1) increasing violence in society; (2) poor use of language and words; (3) strong peer group (gang) influence in violent behavior; (4) increased self-destructive behavior, such as drug use, drinking, and free sex; (5) the increasing blurring of good and bad moral guideline; (6) decreased work ethic; (7) the lower the respect for parents and teachers; (8) the low sense of responsibility of individuals and citizens; (9) the culture of dishonesty; and (10) the existence of mutual suspicion and hatred among each other. The parenting is to introduce and instill a value system and lead children to become independent, mature and responsible individuals by their general stages of development and uniqueness as an individual (Erhamwilda et al., 2022).

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The current soaring problem of moral degradation is indeed very worrying, such as lack of respect for others, dishonesty, attempts to hurt oneself by using drugs, getting drunk, and committing suicide (Puspitawati, 2009). As parents, of course, we expect our children to grow and develop into individuals with high morals and integrity, one of which is when children have a high level of empathy and honesty. The aspect of independence is very important in a child's life, because with independence the child will be more responsible for his own needs and will be more confident (Amaliana & Afrianti, 2022).

Empathy is the ability to realize, understand, and appreciate the feelings and thoughts of others (Stein & Book, 2000). According to Daniel Goleman (1996) behaviors that belong to the form of empathy are taking care of oneself and others, fulfilling obligations, contributing to society, and easing the burden on others. Empathy is more than survive, therefore empathy focuses on the primary role of the human being.

In addition to empathy, a positive character that needs to be built in children is honesty. Honesty is a behavior based on efforts to make oneself a trustworthy person in words, actions, and work (Buchori et al., 2016; Rochmawati, 2018). Instilling honest character from an early age is important because, with honesty, children can develop better living conditions (Kurniah & Suprapti, 2017). Honesty can also affect a child's relationship with other individuals. The more honest the child, the more liked by other people and the environment (Khaironi, 2017).

Someone who grows and develops in a harmonious whole family accompanied by directed education has positive character with adequate facilities; is an ideal situation that provides a great opportunity for the formation of a "perfect" individual, qualified, potential and tough. However, perfect conditions are not always obtained. Ironically, more unfavorable conditions are also experienced by some children and adolescents, for example in children and adolescents in orphanages (Wangi et al., 2021)

SOS Children's Villages is a non-governmental non-profit social organization that actively supports children's rights, such as provide family and loving home. In this case, SOS Children's Villages is committed to providing housing and attention to children who have or are at risk of losing parental care (<https://www.sos.or.id/tentang-sos>).

Researchers have provided training to foster parents of SOS Children's Villages Lembang in 2020/2021. Qualitatively, training in foster parents can be declared effective, there is an increase in the knowledge of foster parents regarding the character of respect and responsibility. These abilities can be seen in detail regarding the understanding of foster parents, meaning, and learning strategies for respect and responsibility for children. In this case, knowledge of the effectiveness of material respect and

responsibility will make children have an attitude of tolerance to respect others, train fighting power, and problem-solving skills, and increase self-confidence.

Researchers noted that to continue the cooperation, it was necessary to take the next step by providing further training to children through foster parents. The material provided is in line with previous training on a character in children, namely with honesty and empathy training. The provision of training is still the same as the previous training, namely through roleplay and providing case examples. Through the training that has been carried out on children, this community service is expected to provide tangible benefits to the SOS Children's Village Indonesia in Lembang both for children and to foster parents regarding the cultivation of a sense of honesty and empathy.

## 2. Methods

This training is given to foster parents with honesty and empathy material, namely through roleplay and providing case examples. The participants in this study consisted of 12 foster parents. The data collection carried out for this activity itself was carried out with an FGD (Focused Group Discussion) which was held on May 18th 2022, from 09.00 - 11.30 am. There are two main themes in this discussion, they are honesty (based on Thomas Lickona's theory) and empathy (based on Daniel Goleman's theory). In both themes emerged 3 sub-theme: understanding of foster parent's perspectives regarding honesty and empathy, followed by the teaching strategies for children based on honesty and empathy value, and their parenting experiences that related to the both value. The results of the data obtained are then rewritten, then the contents are analyzed using the coding method. After that, it is rewritten in narrative form.

## 3. Result

In the initial session, foster parents are asked to express their opinions regarding the meaning and meaning of honesty. Here the parents seem to be quite active even though it takes some time before the two foster parents express their opinions. Both parents expressed similar concerns about honesty, where they interpreted it as one of the important values and is often taught to their foster children in everyday life.

1. After being given training in the form of material on honesty attitudes, parents know that honesty is an ability that includes four things, namely conveying the truth, admitting mistakes, being trustworthy, and acting honorably (Zubaedi, 2011).

2. When foster parents are asked to repeat these four abilities they can mention them smoothly.
3. They also know how important it is to apply an attitude of honesty to children because it is a benchmark for kindness (Lickona, 1991).
4. They understand that with the formation of an attitude of honesty can be formed good habits that are engraved through the habits of thoughts, hearts, and feelings.
5. Parents are also taught to apply honesty strategies, one of which can be done in the home environment such as telling stories that contain honest behavior, implementing honest canteens, traditional games, snake and ladder games, and ludo, as well as roleplay activities.
6. They begin to actively relate these strategies to their experiences while at home that have been taught to children.

In the next session, parents were asked to give their opinion about the meaning of empathy, here the participation of parents looks passive where no one can give an answer or opinion about it.

Furthermore, parents are given material, here they understand that:

1. Empathy is a tendency to feel something that another person does if he or she is in that other person's situation.
2. In addition, parents also understand that empathy makes people use their feelings effectively in other people's situations by being driven by their own emotions (Goleman, 1996).
3. They understand that empathy includes listening well to other people's conversations, accepting the other person's point of view, and being sensitive to the feelings of others.
4. Furthermore, parents are also given the material on strategies in training empathy that can be applied at home, such as meeting the emotional needs of children, asking "How would you feel if", giving direct examples, dissecting other people's concerns, and giving children the opportunity to show their empathy.
5. After that parents are given time to share their experiences in teaching empathy at home.
6. One of the parents revealed that at home indirectly he had applied this attitude to children, by donating used clothes and toys that were no longer used to people

in need. In addition, parents also give explanations to children about the different conditions of people who are not as lucky as the current conditions. According to parents, in addition to strengthening empathy, this also gives a sense of belonging to the child.

In this session, parents were given a video show about honesty. Here consists of two videos, the first is about the blessing of honesty in the child who has returned the wallet to the owner, and the second video is about the consequences of dishonesty in the child where the child lies that he has done his homework.

Furthermore, parents are asked to give their opinions regarding the meaning of each of the two videos. At first, no one dared to express their opinion, so then one of the coordinators of SOS Children's Village helped appoint one of the parents.

The parents then concluded the meaning of the two videos, namely about the impact of being honest and lying. Parents distinguish by looking at the chronology of the video they describe in detail.

After the video was re-aired the foster parents began to understand that:

1. A person's honest attitude will lead him to goodness and success.
2. Everytime we do something wrong, we will reap what we have done or there are consequences of our own.

In the next session, parents were given a video about empathy. The first video is about how to deal with a friend or friend who is sad. The second video, it is about one of the activities that children can do at home in applying empathy to their parents, namely by cleaning the house.

Parents understand that:

1. In comforting a friend who is in a sad mood, children can try to accompany their friend, try to comfort, and also find solutions to their problems.
2. Cleaning the house is an activity that contains an attitude of empathy because by helping with housework, children can relieve the energy that our parents usually spend to take care of the house, so that our parents can do other work that children have not been able to do.

At the end of the video, parents were asked to discuss the honesty and empathy they had understood and what kind of experience parents had faced in applying these two attitudes. Here one of the parents actively expressed his similar experience in one

of the empathy videos explaining about helping with homework. Then the parents also asked about some of the activities they did at home and whether they had implemented these two attitudes or not. Furthermore, some parents expressed their opinions about what they had understood after being given the material on both attitudes.

## 4. Discussion

Training for foster parents that has been carried out is running effectively, this is shown qualitatively with several achievements such as an increase in the understanding of foster parents regarding the meaning of honesty and empathy attitudes, knowledge of the forms of honesty and empathy attitudes, and strategies for teaching honesty and empathy attitudes to children at home. This can be seen from the participation of some parents in conveying what they understand at the end of the session.

The application of these two attitudes becomes important, firstly because honesty can develop better living conditions, and empathy as a system that helps emotions to stabilize where this value focuses on the main role of human beings (Goleman, 1996; Kurniah & Suprapti, 2017). At the end of the session, parents were asked to share their experiences while taking care of children at home, parents said that the application of honesty and empathy has actually been carried out, but the child has not shown the attitude of the two optimally, especially in the attitude of honesty.

A great sense of curiosity and openness to parents is an important factor in the continuity of the training carried out, starting from the process of problem identification, training design, and in the deepening process.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the training of honesty and empathy attitudes in children through SOS Children's Village Indonesia foster parents is effective. There is an increase in parents' understanding and knowledge of the meaning and form of honesty and empathy, as well as strategies for teaching these two attitudes to children at home. It helps parents to improve the child's ability to convey the truth, admit mistakes, be trustworthy, act honorably, listen to other people's speech well, accept the other person's point of view, and be sensitive to the feelings of others.

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