



Internalization of Religious Moderation on Children at Raudhatul Athfal Samarinda

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the process of internalizing the religious moderation values on children at an early age. The subjects of this research were principals, teachers, educational staff, parents and students at three Raudhatul Athfal schools in Samarinda. This research used qualitative design. Data collection was carried out for 2 months, from the beginning of February to the end of March 2022. Data obtained through observations, interviews, and documentation. The analysis of the data used the Miles and Huberman model that includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion and verification. The results showed that: 1) Planning of the internalization of religious moderation values on children at Raudhatul Athfal Samarinda was through coordination between schools and stakeholders, identifying and determining school programs in accordance with the school curriculum, formulating materials regarding religious moderation values, formulating the planning of learning tools, 2) Implementation of internalization of the religious moderation values in learning was through the incorporation and strengthening of perspectives, mindsets and practices of religious moderation; curriculum development containing religious moderation through core competencies, building the values of religious moderation through PAI and character education learning materials, 3) the results of the religious moderation value internalization were in the form of an understanding of the *aswaja* principles and moderate attitudes. It is expected that this research can give better insight related to the internalization of religious moderation values on children at an early age.

Keywords: internalization, Raudhatul Athfal, religious moderation

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A. Introduction

Indonesia is a multicultural country consisting of various religions, ethnicities, and islands. According to Law number 1/Pnps/1965, the government gives law protection to the religions followed by the Indonesian citizen namely Islam, Christian, Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist, and Kong Cu (Confucius) (UU PNPS, 2018). Furthermore, it is recorded that around 1,331 types of ethnic groups in Indonesia are united within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (BPS, 2015). Meanwhile, the number of islands scattered in the archipelago, according to the National Gasetir data in 2020, is 16,771 islands and has been recorded on the UNGEGN (*United Nation Group of Expert on Geographical Names*) (Kementerian Kelautan dan Perikanan, 2022).

The heterogeneity of ethnicity and religion is a gift from God Almighty that we should be grateful for by maintaining the integrality, unity and integrity of the nation. Nevertheless, the heterogeneity of society has the potential to trigger social conflict, especially related to religious life. The reality of religious life in Indonesia until now has received attention from various directions, both from within the country and abroad. This is due to the frequent occurrence of social conflicts or frictions with religious backgrounds that appear in the community (Sumadi et al., 2019; Tyas & Naibaho, 2020).

These various conflicts, among others, were triggered by blasphemy, internal problems of religious communities and groups, the destruction of places of worship, hate speech, especially the discriminating between one religious community and another religious community, the radicalism and terrorism, in addition to suicide bombings. This phenomenon shows an indication of social friction in the name of religion. A sacred understanding, incomplete in learning, studying and understanding Islam can eliminate the nuances of rahmatan li al-'alamin.

The existence of educational institutions is to create and build a place for conducive diversity. In reality, cases of intolerance are still found in educational institutions, as happened at SD Inpres 22 Wosi Manokwari (Suwendi, 2021). Research shows that the seeds of intolerance grow when students enter junior high school or high school. As the results of the 2016 SETARA Institute national survey, the tendency of students to be intolerant is 4.6% of students support the violation of vandalizing places of worship, 11% support the caliphate system and 5.8% support the change of Pancasila identity as the basis of the state (Suwanti, 2022). The case of intolerance is closely related to the religious understanding held by the actors of intolerance as well as the result of unequal majority-minority relations.

Interestingly, cases of intolerance and polemics of radicalism (for example) in children at early age also appear in formal institutions (Amala et al., 2022; Yuliana et al., 2022). Moreover, education for early childhood is critical since if children are instilled with hatred, they will grow to be vengeful (Afwadzi, 2020).

One of solutions to break the chain of intolerance, radicalism and terrorism is through religious moderation. The root of religious moderation is *wasatiyah* (middle). Religious moderation is a method of practicing religion in a middle way or in a good way (Munir et al., 2020). Religious moderation means practicing religion or Islam in a middle way and with a good way of implementation. Religious moderation prioritizes the values of *tasamuh* (tolerant), *tawazun* (balanced), *I'tidal* (fair) and *tawwassut* (middle) (Ibda & Sofanudin, 2021).

The government's efforts to strengthen religious moderation are one of the main indicators as an effort to realize the development of culture and national

character. Religious moderation is one of the main issues in the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020-2024 at the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag, 2020). The main target of strengthening religious moderation is the millennial generation in general and children at an early age in particular. This is done considering the tendency or the potential for conflict and social friction. Any big or small problems occurring in the society must get concern by considering that disintegration has the potential to cause violent conflicts, which will later might be linked to religion.

Several studies related to religious moderations in educational context were conducted by Fuad and Susilo (2019) on how Islamic moderation was implemented in higher education, Kartikawati (2019) exploring the model of Islamic moderation in education, and Suharto (2019) examining university students' understanding towards Islamic moderation. Most studies were related to the implementation of religious moderation at higher education level, while only a few studies discussed about religious moderation at early childhood education level. Therefore, this study focused on exploring the internalization of religious moderation values on children at an early age.

B. Literature Review

1. Children at an Early Age and Early Childhood Education

Children at an early age are individuals who are experiencing growth and development. While growth is closely related to the physical parts of the body that can be measured, such as height and weight, development is a transformation that occurs in their life. Early childhood is an appropriate representative to provide the basis for the development of physical competence, language, social emotional, self-concept, moral, arts and religious values (Ardiansari & Dimiyati, 2021). According to several experts, the stages of early childhood development are as the followings:

a. Ericson's Psycho-social Theories

The stage of initiative versus guilt (3-5 years old): in this stage preschool children face a more comprehensive social world, early childhood faces new challenges. It demands an active and effective characters. Early childhood is characterized to be able to take responsibility for the body, behavior, toys and pets and take the initiative (Aryanti, 2017).

b. Constructivism Theories

For early childhood development, Piaget classified cognitive development into 2 stages including: 1) the sensorimotor stage lasts from birth to 2 years (the infancy stage forms understanding by coordinating sensory experiences (seeing and hearing), with physical motor activities (sensory motors), 2) the operational stage from the age of 2 to 7 years, children begins to be able to connect physical sensory information and show it through a series of imaginary words and explain it (Aryanti, 2017).

Law Number 20 of 2003 Chapter 1 Article 1 paragraph 14 concerning Early Childhood Education emphasizes the efforts to foster formal, non-formal and informal education on children by providing stimulus for children's physical and emotional growth and development to prepare them for further education. The principles of early childhood education are carried out using the following standards: (1) learning while playing (2) utilizing a supportive climate (3) utilizing various learning media and learning assets. Similarly, there are several principles

of early childhood education in surah Luqman, namely: (1) orientation to needs; (2) learning while playing; (3) using a conducive environment; (4) using integrated learning; (5) gradually or repeatedly (Hatta, 2012; Hikmah & Alam, 2022).

Raudhatul Athfal as one of the centers of Islamic education in the formal stream of early childhood education, remains *istiqomah* and consistent, carries out its role as a center for deepening religious knowledge (*tafaqquh fi al-din*), an Islamic *da'wah* institution and participates in educating the nation (Masdalipah et al., 2017). Each uniqueness and development procedure in accordance with the age group of early childhood, is listed in PERMENDIKBUD Number 137 of 2014 concerning National Standards for Early Childhood Education (replacing PERMENDIKNAS Number 58 of 2009). The regulation provides an understanding that Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is a form of organizing activities focusing on laying the foundation for growth and 6 (six) developments including: religion and morals, physical motor, cognitive, language, social-emotional, and art. Targets of PAUD are to develop all the potential of children so that they are able to function as complete human beings in accordance with the philosophy of the State.

2. Mainstreaming Religious Moderation on Children at An Early Age

The word “moderation” in English is often associated in the meaning of average, core, standard, or non-aligned. Generally, moderation means focusing on balance in terms of beliefs, morals, and character, both when treating others as individuals, and when dealing with state institutions. The word “moderation” in Arabic is *al-wasathiyah* derived from the word *wasath*. According to Muhammad bin Mukrim bin Mandhur al-Afriqy al-Mashry, etymologically *wasathiyah* means something in the middle or between two sides. Terminologically, the word “*wasathan*” means middle as balance (*al-tawazun*) that is balance between two contradictory ways or directions: spirituality and materiality, individuality and collectivity, contextual and textual, consistent and change (MUI Digital, 2020; Munawwir, 1984; Shihab, 2007).

A previous study of religious moderation by Sari (2021) themed implementation of the religious moderation values at PAUD through PAI. The results of the study describe the application or implementation of religious moderation values in early childhood through PAI subjects. Meanwhile, this study focused on analyzing the process of internalizing the values of religious moderation in children through educational components and activities based on the values of religious moderation in Raudhatul Athfal, Samarinda city.

Raudhatul Athfal of Samarinda is under the guidance of the Ma'arif Nahdlatul Ulama Educational Institution of Samarinda City. As it is known that Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is a Diniyyah-Ijtima'iyah (Religion and Social) organization which not only pays attention to religious affairs, but also pays attention to social and even national interests. This is important and interesting to study, related to the efforts of the institution in preparing a generation that is moderate and nationalist.

C. Method

This research was field research using descriptive qualitative methods. The purpose of using qualitative methods is to explore the implementation of the internalization of the religious moderation values on children at Raudhatul Athfal, Samarinda city. The research focused on the process of internalizing religious moderation on children at an early age through the teaching and learning process. The field research emphasized on the internalization process viewed from the aspect

of the curriculum, learning methods and teaching tools used. The data were collected through observations of the implementation of learning internalization at Raudhatul Athfal, documentation related to the curriculum and other related matters, and interviews from the managers of the educational institution. This data collection technique is said to have a dual function, is simple and can be done without spending a lot of money because through observation the behavior and the meaning of the behavior could be found out (Sugiyono, 2014).

The data sources of this research include primary data collected from observations, interviews with the managers of the Ma'arif Educational Institution of Samarinda City, and documentation in the form of school data (profiles), curriculum, teaching materials and teaching tools used, as well as secondary data in the form of notes related to literacy carried out by the Ma'arif Institutions of Samarinda City.

The data sources of this research included three schools of Raudhatul Athfal under the guidance of the Ma'arif Educational Institution, Samarinda City, East Kalimantan. The details are: RA Ma'arif 001 Lok Bahu Sungai Kunjang District, RA Ma'arif 002 Sindangsari Sambutan District, and RA Ma'arif 003 Rawa Makmur Palaran District. These schools were chosen from different districts in Samarinda. The number of informants were 9 people, including educators and educational staff. Data collection was carried out for 2 months, from the beginning of February to the end of March 2022. Researchers analyzed teaching and learning activities, the curriculum applied, the suitability of the teaching and learning process with the materials taught to students regarding the values of religious moderation and the method applied. The data analysis techniques used the Miles Huberman model namely data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing and verification to present the research results descriptively (Miles et al., 2014).

D. Findings and Discussion

The researcher started with the initial observation, then interviewed the informants in order to collect information to answer the research questions, then carried out documentation to strengthen the information from the interviews and the observations carried out by the researcher during the study from the beginning to the end of the study. Next, triangulation of data sources was carried out to cross-check the data with facts from different informants and finally the results of other studies.

1. Planning of Religious Moderation Values at Raudhatul Athfal Samarinda

Planning is the initial preparation stage in order to arrange a plan in order to achieve goals; a formal procedure to get results in a decision or policy. This planning can be interpreted as a guideline or outline and establishing the steps in order to obtain the results and goals to be achieved.

Planning for the internalization of religious moderation at school is essential in order to strengthen religious moderation as a mindset, perspective and religious practice confirming the values of *tasamuh*, *tawassuth*, *tawazun*, and *itidal*. The form of planning is to determine the strategy for implementing the concept of religious moderation into school programs or activities, both in the learning process and outside of learning, that is measurable and sustainable.

Based on the explanation above, the planning of internalizing religious moderation values at Raudhatul Athfal Samarinda includes:

a. Coordination between the Principal and Stakeholders

Planning begins with coordination between the school and stakeholders, in this case some persons in charge from the school together with stakeholders collaborate to achieve the specified goals. Stakeholders include the government, surrounding communities, school committees and administrators. Schools with stakeholders synergize as well as coordinate to formulate strategic plans regarding religious moderation at schools, determine team work, determine outputs, determine policies, and determine the suitability of school programs with the curriculum. In determining the plan, one of them is synergizing with the local culture or local wisdom, namely the strong tradition of Jam'iyah Nahdhotul Ulama.

In more detail, the planning carried out by the school includes: 1) intense coordination with stakeholders, foundation managers and educators as well as competent parties regarding technical guidelines for religious moderation at schools from the ministry of education and culture and the regional office of the ministry of religious affairs; 2) the principal together with the team work of curriculum designers coordinate with school policy makers, educators, and stakeholders to formulate the output of religious moderation at school; 3) identify and determine school programs regarding the religious moderation that synergies the school curriculum; 4) determine the school rules or regulations of the school; 5) socialization to all school members and; 6) implementation of the internalization of religious moderation values in the classroom and outside of school.

b. Developing Programs in accordance with the School Curriculum

Educational institutions are essential in the implementation as well as the strength of the implementation of religious moderation at schools by adapting the curriculum with school programs based on the point of view of religious moderation; manifestation into school programs in strengthening the quality and competitiveness of individuals and the school environment that can affect the students' perspective, mindset and behavior.

School programs designed based on religious moderation include conditioning communication and interaction during the learning process, in intra or extra activities, *aswaja* matters, congregational prayer practices and memorizing short surah of the Qur'an together. These programs are realized together in order to maintain moderation at school. Various programs were identified in order to achieve the values of religious moderation so that each individual is able to internalize these values.

The internalization of religious moderation values clearly appears in PAI learning and character education as illustrated in the implementation of religious moderation in general and special class classifications according to the age of the students. To support the program, it appears that the schools have prepared a syllabus, annual program, semester program, lesson plans, learning tools and the like.

c. Socialization

Socialization is a process of introducing a system to the public so that it acquires culture and internalizes social norms in accordance with a particular level. The internalization of the values of religious moderation includes a strategy by socializing the concept of religious moderation to all school

members. The form of socialization of religious moderation at schools is the peace and harmony among school members, appreciation, respect for the rights, love, empathy and tolerance and the like.

Socialization is one of the effective stages to grow and sustain the values of religious moderation, especially at Raudhatul Athfal Samarinda which has a Jam'iyah Nahdhotul Ulama background; the values of Jam'iyah is based on the principles of *aswaja*.

d. Planning of Learning Tools

Raudhatul Athfal Schools as a base for implementing the values of religious moderation at schools are able to adapt the curriculum to a learning system that includes religious moderation. Schools are able to synergize with the curriculum containing moderate values, especially PAI and character subjects as well as preparing learning tools. One of the learning tools is the presence of the surrounding community.

2. Implementation of Internalizing Religious Moderation Values on Children at Raudhatul Athfal Samarinda

Implementation is carried out after the preparation of a careful, detailed, systematic plan. The implementation includes a series of activities, actions, and the existence of a system mechanism that appears in planned activities to achieve the expected goals.

The Raudhatul Athfal School of Samarinda conducted socialization regarding the ideas of religious moderation, which were translated from the Ministry of Religious Affairs in synergy with the management. Although structurally there is no official letter from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, culturally it has been implemented.

a. Internalizing and Strengthening Perspectives, Mindset, and Practices of Religious Moderation

The implementation of religious moderation through PAI and Character Education courses did not initially refer to the regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs (PMA) but tried to make it happen through various school programs. The form of internalizing the values of religious moderation at Raudhatul Athfal Samarinda is by teaching the values of tolerance, courtesy, appreciation and respect for people, motivation, making good friends with people despite different beliefs, not mocking friends, visiting sick friends, not offending other religions, giving equal space and opportunity to anyone regardless of their friend's background.

In the context of *aswaja*-based school culture as a place for religious moderation, culturally there are activities carried out at schools such as the Maulid Nabi (Prophet's birthday) and Isro Mi'roj celebration. The results of observations showed that the Maulid Nabi activity were carried out enthusiastically through an online zoom meeting with a particular scholar (ustadz) from Nahdhotul Ulama (NU) considering the COVID-19 pandemic. The school gives understanding and internalization of religious values through lectures so that the output of these religious activities will be seen from the attitude shown. Students can internalize the character of *karimah* (noble) as the morals of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the role model for Muslims, *Rahmatul Lil Alamin*. This is in line with Raudhatul Athfal's vision of the realization of a generation with noble characters. The purpose of Raudhatul Athfal is to build a

foundation for the development of the students' potential to become human beings who are faithful and pious to Allah SWT with noble characters, healthy, knowledgeable, skillful, creative, innovative, independent, and confident.

School programs such as praying together, reading short surah of the Qur'an, loving the environment, and aswaja matters contain the values of religious moderation. One of the aswaja activities is teaching the values of *tasamuh*, *tawasuth*, *Itidal* and *tawazun* which uphold the spirit of religious moderation.

The internalization of the religious moderation values was implemented since the beginning of entering the school, it was even listed in the school manual related to tolerance. The implementation since the beginning of entering school is indirectly applied to every school member so they have started implementing the values of religious moderation unconsciously. The implementation of PAI and character education learning begins with a morning greeting, which is 15 minutes before the lesson the teacher welcomes students with the 5 S (smile, greet, accost, be polite, and courteous), dhuha prayer together, mainly followed by reading short surah of the Qur'an, then entering the apperception class, giving motivation and any information regarding school activities; then, the core learning activities and the closing of the lesson in accordance with the conditions of the students and the learning objectives. Subjects are carried out at predetermined lesson hours.

In principle, the learning carried out at several Raudhatul Athfal as Islamic-based schools under Nahdhotul Ulama, Samarinda City applies the 2013 curriculum learning model.

b. Religious Moderation based Curriculum Development

Curriculum development in this case interprets core competencies, those are KI 1 and KI 2. Attitude and social core competencies can be developed in accordance with the conditions of students in the context of each class. Competency development in this case accommodates the values of religious moderation in each lesson, and is designed based on the creativity of each educator while still referring to the learning objectives that have been determined.

The values of religious moderation described in the curriculum synergize with moderate values by Islam. This is in line with (Wasehudin & Syafei, 2021) that moderate values in Islam need to be manifested in the educational curriculum. Support from all parties is required in order to realize this idea. The Directorate General of Islamic Education under the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia is legally and formally responsible for learning this idea (Wasehudin & Syafei, 2021).

c. Internalization of Religious Moderation Values through PAI and Character Education Course

The implementation of religious moderation in PAI and character education courses is through PAI materials including religious tolerance, love for the environment, visiting friends who are sick and the like and incorporating the values of religious moderation at each meeting. The attitude of tolerance is seen in the Morning Greetings program before learning begins and it does not force students, more likely to give freedom of responsibility in order to create a positive climate for all school members.

The internalization of religious moderation values involves aspects of knowledge, feelings, and actions by applying various methods. For example, in the theme of the story of the Prophet and the companions of the Prophet, it applies the methods of advice, modeling, lectures, role playing, and question and answer. This is in line with Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's thought in Ahmad Atabik and Ahmad Bahrudin conveying 5 (five) educational methods, namely education with role modeling, habituation, education and advice, education by giving attention and supervision (Khaironi, 2017).

Through interviews, it is found that the school learning model at Raudhatul Athfal reflects the integration of religious moderation values through *Tawassuth*, *Tawazun*, *Tasamuh*, and *Ta'adul*. *Tawasuth* (middle) means that learning is implemented in accordance with noble character and building the attitude to not be picky in making friends. *Tawazun* (balanced) means that learning instills habits in children to have discussion when making decisions together and teaches children to live healthy. *Tasamuh* (tolerance) means habituation to children through mutual respect in the environment, nationalism, teaching children to be friendly to anyone. *Ta'adul* (Fair) means to not favor particular children, all children get equal learning and learning support.



Figure 1 Tawazun

The term in the Qur'an in QS. Al Baqarah (2): 143 mentioning "*Umatan Washaton*" is closely related to religious moderation, meaning that Muslims are just and chosen, because they will be witnesses to the actions of people who deviate from the truth both in this world and in the hereafter. In addition, the hadith of the Prophet mentions the importance of early childhood education as narrated from Abu Hurairah R.A. The Prophet said "...every child is born in a state of nature, then it is the parents who make them Jew or Christian or Magian ..." (HR. Bukhari).

In addition, Raudhatul Athfal schools apply contextual-based learning that synergizes with religious moderation such as discipline, honesty and tolerance. Character values in early childhood education are: (1) honesty, which is one of the characters that must be possessed by individuals in relation to other individuals; (2) discipline is an important behavior and must be possessed by individuals if they want a better life; (3) tolerance is an attitude of caring for others; (4) independence is an attitude that is needed by individuals (Khaironi, 2017). The character of tolerance can be strengthened through literacy, in addition to improving writing and reading skills (Ibda & Sofanudin, 2021).

The values of religious moderation are embedded in textbook materials delivered to children. The forms of these materials, among others, are related to the themes about character values, including: Going to an Orphanage (inviting

students to visit the orphanage), Greetings, I Like Praying, Playing Together, Praying at the Mosque, etc. The meaning of moderation from the Latin *Moderatio*, means moderate. If it is said, "that person is moderate", this sentence indicates that one is being reasonable, mediocre, and not extreme (Munir et al., 2020).

Furthermore, for instance, the theme of the weekly lesson plan for Raudhatul Athfal Samarinda is the environmental theme of group B. Types of activities: being friendly to anyone, children do assignment sheets about manners to others. Another example is the theme: Mutual Friends for Group A aged 5-6 years. Activities: being friendly to anyone, children show friendly attitudes when meeting friends and practice greeting when meeting friends/teachers. Activities: having a cooperative attitude, children play with their siblings or parents; another indicator is children are accustomed to behave well, appropriately and politely, and instilled with the foundation of faith.

Efforts to strengthen religious moderation on children at an early age are through: (1) instilling mutual respect among friends and other people; (2) public or general PAUD institutions accept students from various beliefs (religions); (3) school efforts in building tolerance on children by teaching them to listen to their friends when they are talking (Yuliana et al., 2022).

The academic success of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) through the values of religious moderation has a critical role in the development of the nation because a great civilization is established from the education process since childhood. Thus, the initial process of establishing a generation will determine the future of a nation. Early age (2 to 7 years old) is a critical period for children in determining the direction of life and the ability to socialize with the surrounding environment (Priatmoko, 2021).

3. The Results of the Internalization of Religious Moderation Values at Raudhatul Athfal Samarinda

The result is obtained after making efforts. The result of internalizing the values of religious moderation means anything that is obtained after carrying out the internalization of the religious moderation values. The results can be observed from how students behave towards their teachers and peers. The results of the internalization show moderate understanding and attitudes based on a substantive understanding, an obedient attitude in practicing their beliefs and being tolerant at school. School members in this case work together in realizing religious moderation at schools. Everything is reflected in the attitudes shown during observations and interviews with students and teachers at Raudhatul Athfal about religious moderation.

a. Obedient Attitudes in Practicing Religion

Teachers provide equal opportunities to learn, especially in PAI and character education courses to explore the materials at predetermined lesson hours. In addition, students encourage each other to learn the religion they believe in. Furthermore, when there are religious activities at school, students are given the freedom with responsibility to explore their talents.

b. Moderate Attitudes

The tolerant attitude shown by students and teachers at Raudhatul Athfal Samarinda is in daily activities at school, they do not distinguish one another in all works and activities. All school members respect and appreciate others,

behave politely and well to everyone. School members understand that differences should not become threats and hostility, but differences can create love and kindness for everyone at school.

E. Conclusion

The results show that the internalization of religious moderation values at Raudhatul Athfal Samarinda are through a) planning through coordination between schools and stakeholders, developing programs in accordance with the school curriculum, socialization, and preparing learning tools; 2) implementation through building and strengthening perspectives, mindsets and practices of religious moderation, curriculum development containing religious moderation, incorporating religious moderation values through PAI learning materials, etc.; 3) the results of the internalization of religious moderation values are manifested in the moderate attitudes of all school members. The results of this study support the internalization of religious moderation values at other educational institutions that have not implemented the internalization. Further investigations on challenges and problems related to the implementation could be researched. It is expected that this research can give better insight related to the internalization of religious moderation values on children at an early age.

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