

**Father Involvement In Early Childhood Education:
A Qur'anic Perspective Through Qiwāmah And Qira'ah
Mubādalah**

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Abstract: Father involvement in early childhood education is increasingly recognized as an important component of children's holistic development. Nevertheless, parenting practices in many contexts continue to associate mothers primarily with caregiving and education while positioning fathers mainly as economic providers. This article examines father involvement in early childhood education from an Islamic perspective by integrating the concepts of qiwāmah and Qira'ah Mubādalah. The study employs qualitative literature-based research through a structured review of scholarly literature concerning father involvement, early childhood education, Islamic parenting, qiwāmah, gender relations, and Qira'ah Mubādalah, combined with normative-philosophical analysis of relevant Qur'anic verses. The literature indicates that father involvement is multidimensional, encompassing spiritual, educational, emotional, caregiving, and social dimensions. Qur'anic narratives, particularly Q.S. Luqmān [31]: 13–19, provide a normative basis for understanding fatherhood as an educational responsibility involving faith formation, moral guidance, communication, and character development. The concept of qiwāmah is reconstructed in this study not merely as hierarchical authority but as responsible leadership oriented toward protection, accountability, and family welfare. Meanwhile, Qira'ah Mubādalah provides a principle of reciprocity through which fathers and mothers are positioned as mutually responsible subjects in children's education and care. Based on the synthesis, this study proposes an Amānah- and Reciprocity-Based Father Involvement Model comprising spiritual, educational, relational-emotional, and care-social dimensions. The model contributes conceptually by integrating contemporary father-involvement scholarship with Qur'anic family ethics and Islamic gender discourse.

Keywords: father involvement; early childhood education; qiwāmah; Qira'ah Mubādalah; Islamic parenting; amānah.

Prolog

Early childhood is a crucial period in human development because experiences within the family and educational environment contribute significantly to children's cognitive, emotional, social, moral, and spiritual development. Within this context, parents constitute the child's first and most influential educational environment. Nevertheless, discussions of parenting and early childhood education have historically tended to place mothers in the central position of caregiving and educational responsibility, while fathers are frequently associated primarily with economic provision.

The growing body of research on father involvement challenges this limited construction of fatherhood. A systematic review by Diniz et al. demonstrates that father involvement during early childhood has become an important field of research because fathers' participation is associated with family well-being and positive child developmental outcomes. At the same time, father involvement is not determined solely by individual willingness but is shaped by social, cultural, relational, and ecological factors.¹

The Indonesian context presents a similar challenge. Research on fathers with children aged one to five years demonstrates the need to strengthen fathers' involvement in childcare, while studies of Islamic early childhood education show that parental involvement extends across the school, home, and broader educational environment.² These findings indicate that father involvement should not be reduced to financial provision but should also encompass emotional, educational, relational, and caregiving dimensions.

From an Islamic perspective, the involvement of fathers in children's education can be connected to the Qur'anic understanding of parental responsibility. The Qur'an presents the family as an important arena for the formation of faith, morality, and character. The

¹ Eva Diniz, Tânia Brandão, Lígia Monteiro, and Manuela Veríssimo, "Father Involvement During Early Childhood: A Systematic Review of the Literature," *Journal of Family Theory & Review* 13, no. 1 (2021): 77–99

² Hayuning Zaskya Nugrahani, Rose Mini Agoes Salim, and Airin Yustikarini Saleh, "Gambaran Keterlibatan Ayah dalam Pengasuhan Anak Usia Dini: Baseline dari Rancangan Program Intervensi untuk Ayah," *Provita: Jurnal Psikologi Pendidikan* 14, no. 1 (2021)

educational dialogue between Luqman and his son in Q.S. Luqmān [31]: 13–19, for example, illustrates the role of a father in transmitting faith, moral values, worship, and ethical conduct. This narrative provides a significant theological foundation for understanding fatherhood as an educational responsibility rather than merely an economic role.

However, the interpretation of the father's position in the family is often associated with the concept of *qiwāmah*. In some conventional interpretations, *qiwāmah* has been understood primarily as male leadership or authority over women. Contemporary studies have increasingly questioned interpretations that reduce *qiwāmah* to hierarchical authority and have explored its relationship with justice, responsibility, protection, and family welfare.³ A more contextual understanding therefore allows *qiwāmah* to be interpreted not merely as a privilege of men but as a responsibility that entails accountability for the welfare of family members.

This discussion becomes particularly relevant when considered alongside the perspective of *Qira'ah Mubādalah*. The *mubādalah* approach emphasizes reciprocity and mutuality in relationships between men and women. Within the context of parenting, this perspective challenges the assumption that caregiving and children's education are inherently maternal responsibilities. Instead, father and mother can be understood as mutually responsible subjects who participate in nurturing, educating, protecting, and developing their children.

Previous studies have examined father involvement from psychological, educational, gender, and Islamic perspectives. Nevertheless, these discussions remain relatively fragmented. Studies of father involvement generally focus on child development and family dynamics, while Islamic studies tend to examine parental responsibility through normative interpretations of Qur'anic texts. Meanwhile, studies of *qiwāmah* and *mubādalah* have predominantly focused on husband-wife relations and gender justice rather than specifically connecting these concepts to father involvement in early childhood education.

³ Siti Aisyah and Ahdiyatul Hidayah, "The Concept of Qiwanmah and Its Implications for Gender Justice in Islamic Family Law in Indonesia," *An-Nisa' Journal of Gender Studies* 16, no. 2 (2023): 251–268

This fragmentation reveals a research gap concerning the integration of father involvement studies with Qur'anic and Islamic gender perspectives. The present study therefore seeks to examine father involvement in early childhood education through the concepts of qiwāmah and Qira'ah Mubādalāh. Rather than treating qiwāmah as a justification for hierarchical authority, this study proposes an understanding of qiwāmah as a form of responsibility, protection, and educational accountability. At the same time, Qira'ah Mubādalāh is employed to formulate a reciprocal model of parenting in which fathers and mothers share responsibility for children's development.

The contribution of this study lies in developing a conceptual framework of father involvement based on amānah (responsibility entrusted by God) and reciprocity. This framework positions fatherhood not simply as a social role but as an ethical and educational responsibility grounded in Islamic values. Through a structured review of relevant literature and Qur'anic analysis, the study seeks to demonstrate how Islamic concepts can contribute to the contemporary discourse on father involvement and early childhood education.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative literature-based research design using a structured literature review combined with a normative-philosophical analysis of Qur'anic teachings concerning parental responsibility and fatherhood. The literature review was conducted to identify, classify, and synthesize previous studies concerning father involvement, early childhood education, Islamic parenting, qiwāmah, gender relations, and Qira'ah Mubādalāh. The Qur'an was positioned as the primary normative source, while scholarly publications were used to contextualize and critically interpret the contemporary discourse on father involvement.

The literature was selected purposively according to its relevance to the research questions. The inclusion criteria comprised scholarly articles, books, and academic publications discussing at least one of the following themes: father involvement in early childhood, parental involvement in children's education, Islamic parenting, qiwāmah, gender relations in the family, Qira'ah Mubādalāh, and fatherhood within contemporary family contexts. Particular attention was given to publications from the last ten years in order to capture recent developments in the discourse, while older works were retained when they constituted important theoretical or conceptual foundations.

The literature was analyzed through three stages. First, relevant sources were identified and classified according to their thematic contribution. Second, the arguments and findings of the selected literature were compared to identify recurring concepts, differences, and unresolved issues concerning the role of fathers in early childhood education. Third, the findings were interpreted through Qur'anic principles and Islamic concepts of family responsibility, particularly *qiwāmah* and *amānah*, and subsequently dialogued with the principle of reciprocity developed through *Qira'ah Mubādalāh*. This process was intended not merely to summarize previous studies but to construct a conceptual framework that connects contemporary father-involvement research with Islamic educational thought.

The Qur'anic analysis primarily focuses on verses related to parental responsibility, family protection, and children's education, particularly Q.S. Luqmān [31]: 13–19 and Q.S. al-Tahrīm [66]: 6. The interpretation of these verses is not treated as an empirical finding but as a normative foundation for constructing the proposed model. Accordingly, the study does not claim to measure the effectiveness of father involvement empirically; rather, it develops a conceptual argument regarding how Islamic principles may contribute to the reconstruction of fatherhood in early childhood education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Father Involvement as a Multidimensional Concept

The literature indicates that father involvement cannot be adequately understood merely through the physical presence of fathers in the household or their economic contribution to the family. Contemporary research conceptualizes father involvement as a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing caregiving, emotional engagement, educational participation, communication, responsibility, and interaction with the child's broader developmental environment.

Diniz et al., through a systematic review of literature on father involvement during early childhood, demonstrate that father involvement has become an important topic in family and child-development research. Their review identified a substantial body of research examining the determinants and consequences of fathers' involvement. Importantly, the authors emphasize that father

involvement is shaped by individual, social, cultural, and ecological factors rather than by individual motivation alone.⁴

This multidimensional understanding is also reflected in research conducted in Indonesia. Nugrahani, Salim, and Saleh, for example, examined father involvement among 54 fathers with children aged one to five years. Their findings indicate that overall involvement was at a moderate level, with positive involvement activities and process responsibility among the dimensions requiring greater attention.⁵ These findings suggest that fathers may be present within the family while still having limited participation in the educational and relational dimensions of childcare.

The findings therefore indicate a conceptual distinction between father presence and father involvement. A father may live in the same household and provide financial resources without necessarily being actively involved in children's learning, emotional development, daily care, or moral formation. Consequently, father involvement should be understood as an active and relational process rather than simply a demographic condition.

Father Involvement in Early Childhood Education

Early childhood constitutes an important stage in which children develop patterns of attachment, communication, moral understanding, self-regulation, and social interaction. Consequently, the participation of both parents is significant for creating an environment that supports children's holistic development.

Research on parental involvement in Islamic early childhood education demonstrates that parental participation may occur through direct involvement in educational institutions, activities outside school, and educational practices within the home.⁴ This finding is particularly important because early childhood education cannot be separated from the family environment. The school provides structured educational experiences, while the family provides continuous interaction and habituation. From this perspective, the

⁴ Eva Diniz, Tânia Brandão, Lígia Monteiro, and Manuela Veríssimo, "Father Involvement During Early Childhood: A Systematic Review of the Literature," *Journal of Family Theory & Review* 13, no. 1 (2021): 77–99

⁵ Hayuning Zaskya Nugrahani, Rose Mini Agoes Salim, and Airin Yustikarini Saleh, "Gambaran Keterlibatan Ayah dalam Pengasuhan Anak Usia Dini: Baseline dari Rancangan Program Intervensi untuk Ayah," *Provita: Jurnal Psikologi Pendidikan* 14, no. 1 (2021)

father's role should not be positioned outside the educational process. Instead, fathers can contribute to children's education through storytelling, religious instruction, play, emotional communication, supervision of digital activities, assistance with learning, and participation in school-family partnerships.

The study by Abdullah et al. explicitly discusses children's education from the perspective of Qira'ah Mubādalah. It emphasizes that children's education is a shared parental responsibility and challenges the assumption that fathers are primarily responsible for financial provision while mothers carry the main responsibility for education.⁶ This perspective provides an important bridge between contemporary father-involvement research and Islamic educational thought.

The synthesis of these studies suggests that father involvement in early childhood education should be understood through at least five dimensions: (1) spiritual involvement, including introducing faith, worship, and religious values; (2) educational involvement, including accompanying learning and intellectual development; (3) emotional involvement, including affection, communication, listening, and psychological support; (4) caregiving involvement, including participation in daily care and children's physical needs; and (5) social and institutional involvement, including collaboration with mothers, teachers, schools, and the wider community. These dimensions demonstrate that father involvement is not an additional task performed when the mother is unable to do so. Rather, it represents an integral component of parental responsibility.

DISCUSSION

Fatherhood as an Educational Responsibility in the Qur'an

The Qur'an does not present fatherhood merely in terms of biological or economic responsibility. Several Qur'anic passages portray parents as responsible for the religious, moral, and personal formation of their children.

One of the clearest examples is the narrative of Luqmān's advice to his son in Q.S. Luqmān [31]: 13–19.

⁶ Abdullah, Mistura, Putri Nisfi Siagian, and Ade Naelul Huda, "Child Education Concept from the Perspective of Qira'ah Mubadalah," *Darul Hikmah: Jurnal Penelitian Hadits dan Tafsir* 10, no. 1 (2024): 42–51

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَبْنِي لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ.....

The passage contains a sequence of educational messages concerning monotheism, gratitude, awareness of God's knowledge, prayer, moral responsibility, patience, humility, and appropriate social conduct⁷. The educational dialogue demonstrates that fatherhood may involve an active role in shaping children's worldview and character.

The significance of this passage lies not merely in the content of Luqmān's advice but also in its pedagogical form. Luqmān addresses his son with affection and communication, while gradually introducing theological, moral, and behavioral values. The Qur'anic narrative therefore presents fatherhood as a relational educational practice.

The principle can also be connected with Q.S. al-Taḥrīm [66]: 6, which commands believers to protect themselves and their families from harm. Although the verse has a broad theological meaning, it provides a normative foundation for understanding family protection as a responsibility shared within the household. In the context of contemporary childhood, protection may include religious formation, moral education, emotional security, and responsible supervision of the child's social and digital environment.

Accordingly, the Qur'anic conception of fatherhood can be interpreted as encompassing at least three interconnected responsibilities: guidance, protection, and education. These responsibilities provide a theological basis for expanding the contemporary understanding of father involvement.

Reconstructing Qiwāmah: From Authority to Responsibility

The concept of qiwāmah has frequently become a central point in discussions of gender relations in the Muslim family. In conventional discussions, Q.S. al-Nisā' [4]: 34

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ

It is often interpreted as establishing male leadership or authority within the family. However, contemporary scholarship has explored the concept in relation to justice, responsibility, family welfare, and changing social circumstances.

⁷ Q.S. Luqmān [31]: 13–19

Aisyah and Hidayah argue that the concept of qiwāmah needs to be considered in relation to balanced rights and responsibilities between husband and wife. Their study connects qiwāmah with gender justice within Islamic family law and emphasizes that family leadership should not be detached from the obligations accompanying it.⁸

This perspective allows qiwāmah to be reconstructed from a purely hierarchical concept into a concept of responsible leadership. In this reconstruction, authority is inseparable from accountability. The greater the responsibility assigned to a person, the greater the obligation to protect and serve the welfare of those under that responsibility.

Such a reconstruction has significant implications for father involvement. If qiwāmah is understood primarily as authority, fatherhood may be reduced to decision-making power. However, if qiwāmah is understood as responsibility, it encourages fathers to become actively involved in the welfare and education of family members.

Therefore, the present study does not propose abandoning the concept of qiwāmah. Rather, it proposes reading qiwāmah through its ethical implications: responsibility, protection, provision, guidance, and accountability.

This interpretation also avoids an unnecessary opposition between Islamic family leadership and gender equality. Equality does not necessarily require identical functions in every circumstance; rather, it requires that differences in roles do not become a justification for injustice, exclusion, or unilateral domination.

Qira'ah Mubādalah and the Principle of Reciprocal Parenting

The concept of Qira'ah Mubādalah provides a complementary framework for understanding parental relations. The central principle is reciprocity: values, responsibilities, and ethical demands expressed in relation to one gender can also be considered in relation to the other when the underlying moral principle is universal.

Applied to parenting, this approach challenges the assumption that nurturing and educating children are naturally maternal responsibilities. Abdullah et al. demonstrate that the Qur'anic

⁸ Siti Aisyah and Ahdiyatul Hidayah, "The Concept of Qiwamah and Its Implications for Gender Justice in Islamic Family Law in Indonesia," 251–268.

perspective on children's education can be interpreted through the principle of mutual responsibility between fathers and mothers.⁹

The significance of this approach is that it transforms the question from “What can the father help the mother with?” into “How do father and mother share their responsibility for the child?” The first formulation implicitly positions the mother as the primary caregiver and the father as an assistant. The second formulation positions both parents as responsible subjects.

The principle of reciprocity therefore creates an alternative model of parenting in which father and mother cooperate and share responsibility for the child's holistic development.

From “Helping Mother” to Shared Parental Responsibility

One of the conceptual problems in contemporary discussions of father involvement is the use of the term “helping the mother.” Although seemingly positive, the expression may unintentionally reproduce a gendered division of labor.

When childcare is defined as the mother's primary responsibility, the father's participation becomes voluntary assistance. This construction makes it possible for fathers to be praised for performing routine caregiving activities that are treated as ordinary obligations for mothers.

A reciprocal model offers a different starting point. Childcare is a shared parental responsibility, while the specific distribution of tasks can be negotiated according to family circumstances, abilities, time availability, occupational conditions, and children's needs.

This position is consistent with research demonstrating that father involvement is influenced by social and ecological factors. Diniz et al. emphasize that father involvement cannot be explained simply by individual intention because family structures, social expectations, cultural norms, and available resources influence the ways fathers participate.¹⁰

Thus, an Islamic model of father involvement should not simply instruct fathers to “participate more.” It should also address the structural and cultural conditions that shape father participation.

⁹ Abdullah et al., “Child Education Concept from the Perspective of Qira'ah Mubadalah,” 42–51.

¹⁰ Diniz, Brandão, Monteiro, and Veríssimo, “Father Involvement During Early Childhood,” 77–99.

Father Involvement and Positive Masculinity

The reconstruction of fatherhood also requires reconsideration of masculine identity. Traditional constructions of masculinity may encourage men to identify themselves primarily as breadwinners, decision makers, and protectors, while emotional expression and caregiving are associated with femininity.

Such a construction may create a distance between fathers and children's everyday lives. Fathers may fulfill economic responsibilities while remaining less involved in communication, caregiving, emotional support, and educational activities.

The literature on father involvement challenges this narrow construction. Diniz et al. show that contemporary fatherhood increasingly encompasses affection, support, nurturance, and prioritization of children's needs.¹¹ Similarly, Mudau and Sikhwari's study of father engagement in foundation-phase education links fathers' participation with gender equality and positive forms of masculinity.

From an Islamic perspective, emotional closeness between father and child is not inconsistent with masculine identity. The Qur'anic depiction of Luqmān's dialogue with his son demonstrates that educational authority can be expressed through communication and affection rather than domination.

Therefore, the model proposed in this study views positive masculinity not as the abandonment of responsibility or leadership but as the transformation of leadership into care-oriented responsibility.

Father Involvement as Amānah

The concept of amānah provides a further theological foundation for understanding fatherhood. Children are not possessions over which parents exercise unrestricted authority. Rather, they constitute a trust for which parents bear responsibility before God.

This theological perspective has several implications. First, fatherhood becomes an ethical responsibility rather than merely a social status. Second, the quality of fatherhood is measured not only through economic provision but also through the protection and development of the child's physical, emotional, intellectual, moral, and

¹¹ Diniz, Brandão, Lígia Monteiro, and Manuela Veríssimo, "Father Involvement During Early Childhood: A Systematic Review of the Literature," 77–99.

spiritual potential. Third, parental authority becomes accountable to the child's welfare.

The concept of amānah therefore complements the reconstructed understanding of qiwāmah. While qiwāmah emphasizes responsibility in family leadership, amānah emphasizes the moral accountability underlying that responsibility.

The resulting relationship may be formulated as follows: qiwāmah provides the responsibility; amānah provides its ethical foundation; and mubādalāh provides the principle of reciprocity through which that responsibility is practiced. This formulation constitutes one of the principal conceptual contributions of the present study.

The Amānah- and Reciprocity-Based Father Involvement Model

Based on the synthesis of the literature and Qur'anic analysis, this study proposes an Amānah- and Reciprocity-Based Father Involvement Model.

The model consists of four dimensions: (1) Spiritual Dimension: fathers participate in developing children's faith, worship, moral awareness, gratitude, and relationship with God; (2) Educational Dimension: fathers participate in learning activities, intellectual stimulation, storytelling, reading, problem solving, and children's educational development; (3) Relational-Emotional Dimension: fathers establish affectionate communication, provide emotional support, listen to children's experiences, and create a secure relational environment; and (4) Care and Social Responsibility Dimension: fathers participate in daily caregiving and collaborate with mothers, teachers, schools, and communities in supporting children's development.

The four dimensions are not independent. They interact with one another and are mediated by three Islamic principles: qiwāmah as responsibility, amānah as accountability, and mubādalāh as reciprocity. The expected outcome is not simply increased father participation but holistic child development involving spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, social, and physical dimensions.

Conceptual Contribution

The contribution of this model is located at the intersection of three bodies of literature. First, father-involvement research provides empirical and theoretical evidence that fathers contribute to children's

development and that their involvement is multidimensional. Systematic reviews have also identified the need for broader cultural perspectives because much of the existing literature has historically focused on particular Western, middle-class family contexts.¹² Second, Islamic family studies provide concepts such as *qiwāmah*, parental responsibility, and *amānah* that can be used to conceptualize family leadership and responsibility. Third, *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* provides a methodological and ethical principle for reading gender relations through reciprocity and mutuality.

The integration of these three perspectives produces a conceptual position that differs from both traditional patriarchal models and purely secular models of father involvement. It does not reject Islamic concepts of family leadership, but reconstructs their ethical implications in ways that emphasize responsibility, accountability, cooperation, and child welfare.

Epilog

Father involvement in early childhood education should no longer be understood narrowly as economic provision or occasional participation in children's activities. Contemporary literature demonstrates that father involvement is multidimensional and encompasses caregiving, education, emotional engagement, communication, and responsibility. Research in the Indonesian context similarly indicates that father involvement remains an important area for strengthening, particularly in positive involvement activities and responsibility for children's developmental processes.

From an Islamic perspective, the Qur'anic narrative of Luqmān demonstrates that fatherhood can be understood as an educational responsibility involving faith formation, moral development, communication, and character building. The concept of *qiwāmah* can consequently be reconstructed not merely as hierarchical authority but as responsible leadership oriented toward protection and family welfare. Meanwhile, *Qira'ah Mubādalāh* provides a principle of reciprocity through which father and mother can be understood as mutually responsible subjects in the education and care of their children.

Based on the synthesis of the literature and Qur'anic analysis, this study proposes the *Amānah- and Reciprocity-Based Father*

¹² Diniz et al., "Father Involvement During Early Childhood," 77–99.

Involvement Model, consisting of spiritual, educational, relational-emotional, and care-social dimensions. The model positions *qiwāmah* as responsibility, *amānah* as ethical accountability, and *mubādalāh* as reciprocity. Its central implication is that fathers should not be constructed as secondary participants who merely “assist” mothers, but as responsible educational actors who work together with mothers in nurturing children's holistic development.

The study nevertheless remains conceptual and literature-based. The proposed model has not yet been empirically tested across diverse Muslim families or early childhood education institutions. Future research should therefore examine the model through qualitative and quantitative studies involving fathers, mothers, teachers, and early childhood education institutions in different socio-cultural contexts. Such research would help determine how the proposed Islamic framework can be translated into practical parenting programs, family-school partnerships, and father-involvement policies.

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