

**THE ROLE OF THE MOTHER IN A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT DURING THE  
CHALLENGING PERIOD FROM AN INDEPENDENT CHILD TO A MATURE  
INDIVIDUAL**

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**ABSTRACT:** Regardless of whether the person responsible for a child is the mother, the father, or any other family member, it is essential to conscientiously realize that the process of upbringing should begin with oneself. In a child's consciousness, the family environment serves as the first strong foundation that shapes their entire existence, contributes to the development of their thinking, and plays a crucial role in their growth into a highly qualified professional in a particular field. The atmosphere within the family and the surrounding environment significantly influence the child's cognitive, emotional, and social development.

**Key words:** child's consciousness, family environment, influence of the surrounding environment, creative thinking, source of motivation, optimistic mother, ideal father, social environment, concept of interactivity, formation of leadership skills.

**INTRODUCTION**

The greatest contributor to a child's development is undoubtedly the mother. A mother is regarded as the very first source of education and upbringing. Historical perspectives also indicate that child upbringing does not begin after birth, but rather starts during the prenatal period, when the child is still in the mother's womb. During this stage, the child receives initial spiritual and psychological nourishment from the mother.

The mother is a sacred and revered figure whose outlook, inner world, spirituality, moral values, enlightenment, worldview, and way of thinking play a crucial role in shaping the child as an individual. However, it can be observed that some mothers, when their children approach them with questions, tend to neglect them by placing the child's needs in a secondary position. In some cases, they do not attempt to provide answers, search for information, or engage in self-improvement, as if there were matters more important than a child's upbringing. Yet, children are our future. Why, then, are some mothers today completely indifferent to this responsibility?

On the other hand, there are also mothers who feel ashamed of being unable to answer their child's questions and therefore strive to work alongside their children as equals, growing and learning together. Observing mothers who possess creative thinking skills is truly gratifying. Creative thinking fosters initiative in children, develops the ability to approach any situation in an original and flexible manner, and enhances cooperation with others. This, in turn, promotes socialization and the formation of leadership skills in children. Consequently, individuals who



acquire such competencies are more likely to become competent and in-demand professionals across various sectors of society in the future. Identifying and nurturing a child's hidden potential is also a significant responsibility placed upon the mother.

From the perspective of child psychology, it can be stated that there are children who possess hidden talents but are unable to express them freely. Conversely, some children are capable not only of openly expressing their wishes and ideas, but also of making demands; they clearly understand what they need, why they need it, and what actions should be taken. Working and communicating with such children is undoubtedly a source of intellectual satisfaction. At the core of this lies the amount of time a mother dedicates to her child, the effort she invests, as well as her level of education and personal capacity.

A mother should shape the concept of family in a child's consciousness in such a way that the child is able to perceive balance in a moderate and realistic manner. Considering that families differ from one another, shortcomings exist in every household. Some families experience financial difficulties, while others face moral and psychological pressures. Such environments inevitably affect the child. However, psychological issues may also be observed among children raised in materially and socially well-provided families. This indicates that a child fundamentally needs attention. All conditions may be available, yet there is no time allocated for communication. Although every opportunity is created, the child may lack motivation or aspiration, which in turn leads to intellectual and emotional lag compared to peers.

One of the manifestations of these problems can be observed within the context of social and regional environments. In other words, a child may have talent and a mother may have initiative, yet there may be no adequate conditions to develop both. For instance, in certain remote regions of our country, shortcomings in the education system are still evident. When a mother encounters such circumstances, her approach should be such that she serves as a primary source of motivation for her child.

It is essential to convey to our children that they themselves and all of their interests are extremely important to us, that we love them deeply, that we are ready to do everything for their well-being, and that we are making every possible effort within our means. When a child feels this sense of emotional support, they do not cease to act, explore, or strive; on the contrary, they gradually become the authors of new ideas.

It is not always appropriate for both mothers and fathers to interact with their children solely according to age-related assumptions. Parents should not underestimate children by assuming they are too young to understand certain matters. Children perceive events through observation, and most importantly, they possess the ability to analyze what they observe. Through personal observation of the surrounding environment, it becomes evident that many individuals today demonstrate a rather superficial level of independent thinking, inquiry, and aspiration. Imam al-Ghazali's statement, "*Knowledge is lost between modesty and arrogance,*" remains profoundly relevant, as many people feel embarrassed or hesitant to ask questions or even to express what they already know.

Such behavior is often the result of a family environment in which, during childhood, individuals were not granted freedom of speech, their thinking abilities were not nurtured, and



their opinions were neither heard nor guided appropriately. As a consequence, many adults today encounter significant obstacles in becoming highly skilled professionals in their respective fields.

In my view, the more optimistic an individual is, the more developed their creative thinking abilities are, and the more accurately they can assess situations, the more refined their knowledge and intellectual capacity become. The more we learn and strive, the more doors of opportunity open before us.

At present, one of the most pressing issues in our society is the shortcomings in child upbringing and the expansion of factors influencing their emergence, such as the deterioration of the family environment, internal conflicts, and their impact on a child's potential. When we witness that a single ill-mannered child can become a threat to society, or that the immoral behavior of one individual can tarnish the reputation of an entire nation, we must acknowledge that we ourselves also bear responsibility for such outcomes.

This is because the primary source from which a child takes initial examples, forms patterns of thinking, broadens their cognitive framework, perceives events, reflects upon them, and draws conclusions is the family. If we truly understood the extent of the family environment's influence on a child, we would approach this great responsibility with far greater awareness and accountability. How can a child who observes disrespect toward parents, or who does not witness mutual love and affection between siblings, learn to respect themselves and others in the future? How can such a child develop love and care for the surrounding environment and society at large?

Therefore, in the process of upbringing, we must first reflect on whether we ourselves possess fundamental human virtues. What kind of parents are you, I, and we? What qualities does our life partner possess, and which of those qualities are being instilled in our child? What knowledge and values are essential for a child to acquire, and which matters should they perhaps not be exposed to at all?

Some parents begin to complain about their child's "improper" behavior even before the child reaches the age of two or three. They attempt to impose adult-oriented "standards" on a very young child and strive to correct their manners and behavior. This approach is also misguided. At such an early age, when a child's character is not yet formed and they are unable to distinguish clearly between right and wrong, constant reprimanding, forcing them into rigid frameworks, or compelling them to engage in activities beyond their physical and psychological capacity may weaken their will, negatively affect their emotional state, and eventually lead to indifference and apathy toward life.

Our great compatriot Abu Ali ibn Sina (Avicenna), addressing the foundations of educating the younger generation and the means through which it should begin, stated the following: "When a young child has memorized the basic rules of elementary education and language, we then guide them toward a profession, craft, or art according to their inclination. If the child desires to become a scribe, we direct them toward language, writing, eloquence, and communication with people. Naturally, the child's interest is of primary importance in this process."



According to specialists' recommendations, until a child reaches school age, they should be treated with utmost care and affection, meaning that their reasonable wishes are fulfilled, and their playfulness and need for affection are not suppressed. Subsequently, upbringing should be carried out gradually through explanation and, most importantly, through the personal example set by adults. Education should be conducted in a multidimensional manner.

For a child's intellectual development, parents are encouraged to read various books to them, narrate legends and instructive stories, or involve them in games and activities that enhance cognitive abilities. To support psychological and moral development, simple and age-appropriate conversations should be held on enduring themes such as life and death, good and evil, morality, and proper conduct. As for physical development, children may be engaged in beneficial labor and taught activities such as swimming, marksmanship, or horseback riding.

From an early age, children should be read stories from the Holy Qur'an, narrations about the lives of the Prophets, as well as folk tales, epics, riddles, proverbs, and sayings; they should also be encouraged to read such materials themselves. This practice enhances children's intellectual capacity, broadens their thinking, enriches their worldview, and strengthens their memory. Most importantly, by drawing lessons from what they hear, children develop a desire to follow virtuous individuals and benefit from their moral conduct and ethical behavior.

Parents who wish to see their sons and daughters grow intellectually, develop sound reasoning skills, and become thoughtful individuals should, from an early age, share various instructive stories, narrations about the lives and virtues of great historical figures, and symbolic tales that promote goodness, noble character, and proper manners. By doing so, they make a significant contribution to the moral and spiritual development of their children.

Therefore, it is considered appropriate to present below several short instructive stories taken from the book "*Education in Islam*" by the Egyptian scholar Abdullah Abdul Muti'.

### **The Hare and the Tortoise**

Long ago, a hare and a tortoise lived as neighbors. One day, the tortoise said to the hare, "You always blame me for being slow, while you boast about your speed. Today, I challenge you to a race."

The hare replied arrogantly, "Ha-ha-ha! A swift hare like me racing against a tortoise who can barely crawl? That is truly ridiculous!"

However, in order to humiliate the tortoise, the hare agreed to race with him up to the hill ahead. Thus, the competition began.

Confident in his speed and certain of victory, the hare started the race carelessly and proudly. Along the way, he played around, stopped to eat clover and carrots whenever he came across them, and wasted a great deal of time. Meanwhile, the tortoise maintained his seriousness and continued steadily toward the designated finish line without stopping.



When the hare finally looked around to see how far the tortoise had progressed, he realized that the tortoise had already reached the hill. At that moment, the hare understood that it was too late for him to catch up.

Thus, the tortoise won the race thanks to his patience, perseverance, and determination. The hare, on the other hand, lost because of his arrogance and excessive confidence in his speed and agility, as well as his failure to act in a timely and disciplined manner.

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