

# Parenting Strategies for Nurturing Naturalistic Intelligence: Family's Role in Promoting Environmental Awareness

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**Abstract:** This study explores the role of family in nurturing naturalistic intelligence to foster environmental awareness in early childhood. Field data shows that habits such as littering, picking flowers, wasting food, and leaving the television on after watching are still commonly practiced by children. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The subjects of the study were parents (mothers and fathers) from nine families who work as farmers in Peunalom II Village, Tangse, Pidie. The findings indicate that families introduce naturalistic intelligence in diverse ways, such as familiarizing children with local flora and fauna, taking them to the fields or farms, and teaching them to dispose of waste properly. However, parents do not adequately educate their children about the consequences of neglecting environmental care. The study also reveals that children's naturalistic intelligence varies significantly. Many show high interest and enthusiasm in exploring their surroundings, demonstrating a keen ability to observe, recognize, and interact with various objects, including plants, animals, and humans. This research highlights the critical role of parents in fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of the environment in young children, emphasizing the need for more comprehensive environmental education within the family setting..

**Keywords:** Naturalistic Intelligence; Environmental Awareness; Family's Role; Early Childhood.

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## Introduction

In recent decades, environmental issues have gained increasing attention as the consequences of human activities have become more pronounced. Climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss are just a few examples of the pressing challenges that societies around the world face today. Given the urgency of these issues, it is essential to foster a generation that is not only aware of environmental concerns but is also equipped to address them. This begins in early childhood, a critical developmental stage where children form their perceptions and attitudes toward the world around them (Emiliawati et al., 2022).

Naturalistic intelligence, a term coined by Howard Gardner in his theory of multiple intelligences, refers to the ability to recognize, categorize, and interact with the natural environment. This form of intelligence encompasses a deep appreciation for nature and an

understanding of ecological systems, making it vital for promoting environmental awareness. Children who develop strong naturalistic intelligence are more likely to engage in environmentally responsible behaviors and demonstrate a sense of stewardship toward the earth. Therefore, nurturing this intelligence in early childhood is essential for cultivating a generation of environmentally conscious individuals.

Families play a pivotal role in shaping children's experiences and understanding of the environment. As primary educators, parents and guardians have the unique opportunity to introduce their children to nature and instill a sense of wonder and curiosity about the natural world. Effective parenting strategies can include outdoor activities, nature-based learning experiences, and discussions about environmental issues. In rural communities, where children may have more access to natural environments, these strategies can be particularly impactful. Parents can

take advantage of their surroundings to teach children about local flora and fauna, the importance of biodiversity, and the consequences of human actions on the ecosystem.

However, it is crucial to recognize that parenting approaches can vary significantly based on cultural, social, and economic factors. For instance, families in urban areas may face different challenges and opportunities compared to those in rural settings. Additionally, the level of environmental education and awareness among parents can influence their ability to teach children about naturalistic intelligence. Some families may prioritize outdoor play and environmental education, while others may lack the resources or knowledge to engage their children meaningfully with nature. Understanding these dynamics is vital for developing effective strategies to nurture naturalistic intelligence in children.

To understand the role of families in nurturing naturalistic intelligence in early childhood and promoting environmental awareness, several previous studies have been conducted with varied focuses. While there is a common theme regarding naturalistic intelligence, significant differences in approaches, methods, and research focuses create gaps that need to be filled by this study. For instance, the research conducted by Putri demonstrates that parental involvement in developing the naturalistic intelligence of children aged 5-6 years is achieved by engaging them in various activities related to their environment. However, this study does not explicitly connect naturalistic intelligence with environmental awareness. This research aims to fill this gap by focusing on the implications of naturalistic intelligence for the environmental awareness instilled in children (Putri et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the study by Muliastri found a strong relationship between environmental literacy and naturalistic intelligence in children aged 5-6 years, but it employed a quantitative approach that may not delve deeply into the understanding of family influence. This study seeks to complement previous research by utilizing a qualitative approach that emphasizes the role of families in nurturing naturalistic intelligence and environmental awareness (Muliastri et al., 2022).

Additionally, the research conducted by Rianti focuses on environmental character education through a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. While it also highlights children's environmental awareness, this approach does not provide in-depth insights into how families can contribute to nurturing naturalistic intelligence. This research aims to offer a clearer understanding of parenting strategies that families can implement to achieve this goal (Rianti et al., 2023).

On another note, the research by Gustiyono indicates a relationship between parental roles and naturalistic intelligence, but it only focuses on this relationship without exploring how environmental awareness can be integrated into parenting. This study will analyze more comprehensively the role of families in developing naturalistic intelligence that directly relates to environmental awareness (Gustiyono & Ismaniar, 2023).

Furthermore, the research by Gumitri emphasizes stimulating naturalistic intelligence through life science activities but does not link this stimulation to the context of children's environmental awareness. By focusing on the family's role in nurturing naturalistic intelligence, this study will investigate how family interactions with the environment can enhance children's environmental awareness (Gumitri & Suryana, 2022).

Finally, the research conducted by Rohendi examines naturalistic intelligence from the perspective of the Qur'an, but it does not focus on parenting strategies in a modern context (Rohendi et al., 2021). Overall, this research intends to bridge the gap between existing research by deeply analyzing the role of families in nurturing early childhood naturalistic intelligence and its implications for environmental awareness. Through a detailed qualitative approach, this study is expected to provide new insights that are beneficial for parenting practices and environmental education in the community.

This study aims to analyze the role of the family in promoting naturalistic intelligence to foster environmental awareness among young children. By focusing on families in a rural farming community, the research will explore the specific practices, challenges, and outcomes associated with

parenting strategies in this context. Qualitative methods will be employed to gather data through interviews, observations, and documentation, allowing for an in-depth understanding of family dynamics and their influence on children's environmental consciousness.

Furthermore, the findings from this research will contribute to the broader discourse on environmental education and parenting. By identifying effective strategies for nurturing naturalistic intelligence, this study will provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and families alike. The ultimate goal is to enhance environmental education at the family level, empowering parents to foster a generation that is not only aware of but actively engaged in protecting and preserving the environment.

### Methodology

This research uses a qualitative method. Qualitative research is used to study the role of families in fostering naturalist intelligence toward environmental awareness in Peunalom II Village. Qualitative research is descriptive and tends to use analysis. The approach used is descriptive. Descriptive analysis is a problem-solving procedure that investigates by describing the state of subjects and objects of research (individuals, institutions, communities, etc.) based on visible facts as they are. The use of a descriptive qualitative approach is due to the research's goal of accurately depicting the characteristics of individuals, conditions, phenomena, or specific groups in the research location. Through this study, the researcher aims to explore, identify, map, and explain matters related to the reality and role of farming families in fostering naturalist intelligence toward children's environmental awareness in Peunalom II Village.

Based on this, the research entitled "Analysis of the Role of Families in Fostering Naturalist Intelligence Towards Environmental Awareness in Peunalom II Village" will be conducted in Peunalom II Village, Tangse District, Pidie Regency. The selection of this location is due to Peunalom II Village being a highland area where

the majority of the population works as farmers, creating a close connection with nature.

The subjects or informants chosen in this study, based on initial observations related to the role of families in fostering naturalist intelligence towards environmental awareness in Peunalom II Village, consist of 9 families. The selection of research subjects used purposive sampling techniques. Purposive sampling is a sample selection technique based on certain considerations. The selection of a group of subjects in purposive sampling is based on specific characteristics that are deemed closely related to the known characteristics of the population. The criteria used in this study are parents who work as farmers and have children aged 5-6 years.

The data collection techniques used by the researcher in this study are as follows: **Interviews**, **Observation**, and **Documentation**. After the data is collected, qualitative data will be processed qualitatively. The procedures involved include categorizing data according to its type and seeking relationships among them. Data analysis will be conducted using a qualitative approach, where the collected data will be described in words and separated according to inductive thinking patterns, that is, looking at specific facts and events, which are then generalized generally. The qualitative approach to data analysis will be conducted from the beginning of the activities until the end. This is to ensure consistency in the overall data analysis. The steps of data analysis conducted include **Data Reduction**, **Data Presentation**, and **Conclusion Drawing**.

### Results and Discussion

This study reveals the important role of families in fostering the naturalistic intelligence of young children, particularly in Peunalom II Village, Tangse, Pidie. Based on data collected through interviews and observations, several findings provide a comprehensive picture of how parents interact with their children in the context of environmental awareness.

### 1. Family's Role in Introducing Naturalistic Intelligence

Through interviews, parents described various methods they use to introduce naturalistic intelligence to their children. These methods include:

#### a. Direct Interaction with the Environment

Parents often take their children to the garden or fields, where they can directly observe various plants and animals. Observations indicate that children are very enthusiastic when taken to the garden, where they actively learn about the plants being grown and recognize the animals around them. This shows that hands-on experiences help enhance children's interest in their environment.

#### b. Non-Formal Learning Activities

Interviews revealed that many parents encourage their children to participate in outdoor activities, such as feeding animals or helping to tend the garden. Observations show that children greatly enjoy these activities and tend to be more attentive to their environment when involved in such engagements.

#### c. Unstructured Environmental Education

Although parents have made efforts to introduce the environment, many admit that they do not have a deep understanding of the consequences of not caring for the environment. Observations show that some children still engage in negative habits, such as littering and not turning off the television after use. This indicates a gap between the introduction of naturalistic intelligence and a proper understanding of the impact of such behaviors.

### 2. Variations in Children's Naturalistic Intelligence

Observational data indicate that children's naturalistic intelligence varies widely. Many children demonstrate good skills in observing and recognizing objects in their surroundings. Some children even show a strong interest in different types of plants and animals and can distinguish between safe and dangerous objects. However, not all children share the same level of interest; some are more attracted to gadgets and indoor activities.

### 3. Habits That Need Improvement

Data from observations highlight negative habits that children still engage in, such as wasting food and failing to dispose of trash properly. This suggests that while parents strive to instill positive values, the implementation of these habits still requires reinforcement. Interviews with parents indicate their awareness of the importance of teaching children about the environment, but they acknowledge time constraints and opportunities for in-depth discussions on these matters.

### Conclusion

Overall, this research demonstrates that parents in Peunalom II Village have actively engaged in introducing naturalistic intelligence to their children through direct experiences with the environment. However, there is still a lack of understanding and deeper instillation of environmental awareness values. It is crucial for parents to emphasize the importance of caring for the environment and to provide more structured education so that children can grow into individuals who not only recognize but also appreciate and care for their surroundings.

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