



Parenting Strategies for the Early Prevention of Bullying Among Generation Alpha

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Abstract

The development of digital technology and changes in social interaction patterns in Generation Alpha present new challenges in parenting, including the increased potential for bullying behavior, both in direct interactions and through digital spaces. In this context, families have a strategic role in developing children's social, emotional, moral, and character skills as a foundation for early bullying prevention. This study aims to analyze parenting strategies in preventing bullying behavior in Generation Alpha and identify parenting styles that can strengthen children's resilience to aggressive behavior and bullying. This study used a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews with parents, observations of children's interaction patterns in the family and social environment, and analysis of relevant documentation. Data were analyzed thematically through the stages of data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results show that early bullying prevention can be strengthened through five main parenting strategies: open communication between parents and children, role modeling in developing prosocial behavior, strengthening character education and empathy, monitoring children's social interactions and digital activities, and implementing consistent, non-violent positive discipline. The research findings confirm that responsive, communicative, and character-oriented parenting not only serves to prevent children from becoming bullies but also improves children's ability to recognize, reject, and report bullying behavior. This research contributes to the development of a family-based perspective on bullying prevention by positioning parents as key actors in building a safe, inclusive, and well-supportive developmental environment for Generation Alpha.

INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior that can have serious impacts on a child's social, emotional, psychological, and academic development. Bullying behavior is not only in the form of physical violence, but also includes verbal insults,

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social exclusion, intimidation, the spread of harmful information, and aggressive actions carried out through digital media (Fajriani et al., 2025). The development of communication technology has expanded the space for children's interactions so that bullying practices are no longer limited to the school environment or direct play environments, but can also occur through various digital platforms. This condition makes bullying prevention an issue that requires attention not only from educational institutions, but also from the family as the first and primary environment in the formation of a child's character. Early prevention is important because behavioral patterns, emotional regulation skills, empathy, and how children interact with others begin to form through social experiences gained within the family and surrounding environment (Sumarni et al., 2024; Puspita & Romlah, 2026).

This issue becomes even more complex when linked to the characteristics of Generation Alpha. Generation Alpha is a generation that, from an early age, grew up in an environment closely connected to digital technology, the internet, smart devices, and various forms of technology-based communication (Hakim et al., 2023). This proximity provides various opportunities for the development of children's knowledge, creativity, and communication skills, but at the same time, it also presents challenges in social and emotional development. Children may acquire information and interact with a wider environment before they have sufficient ability to understand the consequences of their actions. In certain situations, exposure to aggressive communication, negative content, violent language, and uncontrolled digital interactions can affect how children understand social relationships and resolve conflicts (Astuti et al., 2025; Rustiya & Rahman, 2025). Therefore, the characteristics of Generation Alpha require parenting strategies that are not only oriented towards meeting physical and academic needs, but also capable of developing social literacy, digital literacy, self-control, empathy, and moral responsibility.

Families play a fundamental role in shaping children's behavior because the primary educational process takes place through interactions between parents and children. Parents serve not only as supervisors but also as educators, behavioral models, emotional support providers, and facilitators of children's social development. The way parents communicate, set boundaries, resolve conflicts, provide rewards and consequences, and respond to children's mistakes can influence the formation of social behavior patterns. Warm, responsive, consistent, and communicative parenting has the potential to build a sense of security and foster a child's ability to understand others' feelings (Dea et al., 2025; Rukmayana & Muthohar, 2025). Conversely, parenting styles that are overly harsh, inconsistent, lack communication, or neglect children's emotional needs can create conditions that are less conducive to the development of emotional regulation and prosocial behavior. Therefore, parenting strategies are a crucial component in building a developmental environment that can prevent the emergence of bullying behavior from an early age.

Preventing bullying through parenting is not enough to simply prohibit children from engaging in violence. Parents need to develop an educational process that enables children to understand why bullying is a behavior that is detrimental to themselves and others. Empathy education, for example, helps children recognize and understand the feelings of victims, open communication allows children to share social experiences without fear, while positive discipline helps children understand the consequences of their behavior without resorting to violence as a method of education (Setiowati & Dwiningrum, 2020). Furthermore, monitoring digital device use is increasingly important for Generation Alpha because bullying can occur indirectly through messages, comments, online games, social media, or various digital interaction spaces. Therefore, parenting in the digital era needs to simultaneously integrate supervision, mentoring, role modeling, communication, and strengthening

moral values.

Numerous studies on bullying indicate that preventing bullying behavior requires the involvement of various child developmental environments. Schools play a crucial role through anti-bullying policies, character education, supervision, and the creation of a safe and inclusive school climate (Amaniyah & Prastyo, 2025). However, interventions that focus solely on schools have limitations because children's behavior is also influenced by experiences and interaction patterns that occur outside of school. The family is an integral part of this prevention process. Nevertheless, some research still primarily addresses bullying from the perspective of the school environment, the characteristics of perpetrators and victims, or educational intervention programs. While studies that specifically integrate parenting strategies with the developmental characteristics of Generation Alpha, including the challenges of digital interactions, still need to be strengthened.

This research gap highlights the need for an approach that positions parents as preventive actors in developing children's abilities to face the risks of bullying from an early age. This approach views parents not only as those tasked with monitoring children's behavior, but also as educational agents actively shaping children's empathy, emotional regulation, interpersonal communication, conflict resolution skills, and social responsibility. This perspective is increasingly relevant for Generation Alpha, as their developmental environments can no longer be clearly separated between physical and digital spaces. Therefore, parenting strategies need to be adaptive to the changing social and technological environments children encounter (Agustini et al., 2024; Kamila & Zahratunnisa, 2025).

Based on these issues, this study focuses on parenting strategies in preventing early bullying in Generation Alpha. This study aims to analyze the forms of parenting strategies implemented by parents in preventing bullying behavior and identify parenting practices that can strengthen children's social, emotional, moral, and digital abilities. Academically, this study is expected to contribute to the development of studies on family-based bullying prevention by integrating parenting perspectives and the characteristics of Generation Alpha. Practically, the research results are expected to serve as a basis for parents, educators, and educational stakeholders in designing bullying prevention strategies that are preventative, collaborative, sustainable, and appropriate to the developmental needs of children in the digital era.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to analyze parenting strategies in preventing early bullying in Generation Alpha. This approach was chosen because the study focuses on an in-depth understanding of parental experiences, practices, and interaction patterns in shaping children's social, emotional, and moral behavior. Research informants were selected purposively based on the criteria of parents who have Generation Alpha children, are directly involved in the parenting process, and accompany their children's social and digital activities. The study can also involve teachers or educators as supporting informants to gain a more comprehensive perspective on children's social behavior (Asril et al., 2026; Langputeh et al., 2026). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were used to explore parent-child communication patterns, discipline implementation, empathy building, role modeling, social supervision, and assistance in the use of digital technology. Observations were conducted on interaction patterns and parenting practices relevant to bullying prevention, while documentation was used as supporting data to strengthen the information from the interviews and observations. Data were analyzed thematically through the stages of data condensation, coding, information grouping, data presentation, theme identification, interpretation, and conclusion.

drawing. The analysis was directed at identifying patterns of parenting strategies that play a role in building empathy, emotional regulation, communication skills, conflict resolution, and children's awareness of bullying behavior. Data validity was carried out through triangulation of sources and techniques by comparing information from parents, supporting informants, observation results, and documentation (Engkizar et al., 2024; Bian et al., 2026; Busamayari et al., 2026; Hamid et al., 2026; Salamah et al., 2026). Member checking was also conducted to ensure the consistency of the researcher's interpretation with the information provided by the informants. The entire research process adhered to ethical research principles, including informant consent, confidentiality of identity, protection of children's information, and use of data only for academic purposes. With these procedures, the research is expected to produce credible and contextual findings regarding parenting strategies as a preventive approach in building the social, emotional, moral, and digital skills of Generation Alpha to prevent bullying from an early age.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

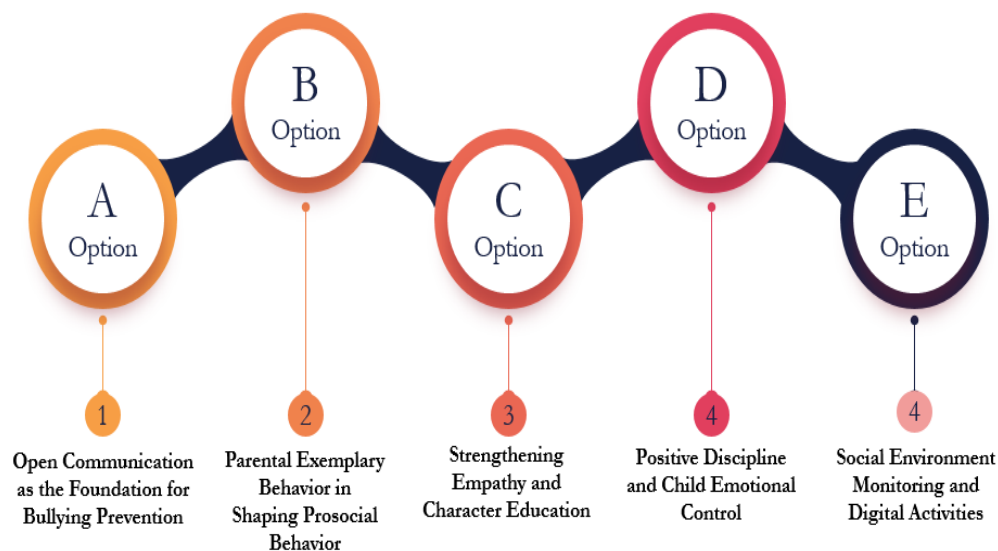


Fig 1. Five Parenting Strategies for Preventing Bullying Behaviour Among Generation Alpha

Open Communication as the Foundation for Bullying Prevention

Research shows that open communication between parents and children is an important foundation for early bullying prevention in Generation Alpha. Open, warm, and dialogic communication provides a space for children to share experiences, feelings, conflicts, and problems they face within the family, school, and digital environments (Fitroturohmawati & Musnandar, 2026). In the context of parenting, communication serves not only as a means of conveying advice but also as a mechanism for building trust and a sense of security, enabling children to share unpleasant experiences. These findings align with systematic studies showing that warm and open parent-child communication is associated with more positive child well-being, while hostile or negative communication is associated with poorer well-being.

Open communication also has a preventive function because it allows parents to detect changes in their child's behavior before issues develop into more serious problems. Children who experience bullying may exhibit changes in their communication styles, emotions, social relationships, and daily activities. Conversely,

children who are potential perpetrators of bullying also need communication space to understand their emotions, conflicts, needs for social recognition, and the consequences of their behavior on others (Sutisna & Tresna, 2025). Therefore, communication needs to be built on two-way principles based on active listening, responding non-judgmentally, asking open-ended questions, and validating the child's feelings. Empirical evidence also suggests that parent-child communication is related to the development of cyberaggression; longitudinal research has found that changes in parental communication and social norms may be associated with the development of online aggressive behavior in early adolescence.

In the context of Generation Alpha, open communication needs to expand beyond face-to-face interactions to children's experiences in the digital environment. Parents need to cultivate a habit of dialogue about their children's activities when using the internet, online games, social media, and various forms of digital communication. This dialogue should not only include prohibitions and restrictions on technology use, but should also help children recognize forms of cyberbullying, understand the impact of words and actions in the digital space, and know when and whom to seek help (Mundaroh, 2025). A systematic review of parents' views on cyberbullying indicates that family involvement is a crucial component in addressing the issue, while a meta-analysis of parent-based interventions demonstrates the importance of improving parenting skills, parent-child interaction, and communication in cyberbullying prevention programs (Syawitri, 2024).

Thus, open communication cannot be understood simply as a conversational activity between parents and children, but as a parenting process that builds emotional bonds, trust, social literacy, and the child's courage to seek help. Parents who are able to create a safe communication environment can help children understand the difference between ordinary conflict, joking, aggressive behavior, bullying, and cyberbullying. Consistent communication also allows parents to reinforce prosocial behavior and correct aggressive behavior without shaming the child. Thus, open communication forms the foundation for preventative bullying strategies because it works before bullying behavior develops into a more persistent pattern. From this perspective, the success of bullying prevention is determined not only by parents' ability to supervise their children, but also by their ability to build relationships that make children feel heard, valued, and protected.

Parental Exemplary Behavior in Shaping Prosocial Behavior

Research shows that parental role models are an important strategy in shaping children's prosocial behavior and are part of preventive efforts against bullying. Children acquire social learning not only through advice and rules given by parents, but also through observing behavior displayed in everyday life (Febriana et al., 2025; Yosep et al., 2025). The way parents speak, treat family members, respond to differences of opinion, control anger, apologize, help others, and resolve conflicts are concrete experiences that children can observe and imitate. Thus, values such as respect for others, caring, tolerance, responsibility, and empathy will be more easily internalized if children see consistency between what is taught and what parents do. Studies on the development of children's prosocial behavior show that parental warmth and sensitivity play a role in supporting the development of empathy and prosocial behavior, while parental emotional socialization is related to children's emotional regulation abilities and prosocial development.

Role modeling is becoming increasingly important in the context of bullying prevention because prosocial behavior and empathy are skills that can help children build healthy social relationships. Children who are accustomed to seeing conflict resolved through dialogue, respect, and self-control acquire alternative models for

aggressive behavior. Conversely, if children frequently witness insults, threats, verbal abuse, or the use of dominant power within the family environment, these behaviors are likely to be understood as acceptable ways to resolve conflict. The link between parenting and bullying is also supported by a recent meta-analysis that included 107 studies with over 162,000 participants. The research found that positive parenting was negatively correlated with bullying and victimization, while harsh or uninvolved parenting was positively correlated with both (Chen et al., 2021). Thus, parental role modeling not only shapes desirable behavior but can also reduce the likelihood of children developing aggressive patterns of interaction with peers.

The development of prosocial behavior through role modeling is also closely related to the development of empathy. Parents can set concrete examples by demonstrating concern for family members, helping those experiencing difficulties, respecting differences, and responding appropriately when someone experiences sadness or failure (Suprihyatin et al., 2026). In this process, children learn to understand that social behavior is not only oriented towards self-interest but also considers the feelings and needs of others. This is relevant to research findings on the relationship between empathy and bullying, which show that bullying behavior is negatively related to empathy, while children who act as advocates for victims tend to have higher levels of empathy. More recent longitudinal evidence also shows that empathy can predict a decrease in bullying behavior, while experiences of bullying can predict a decrease in empathy later in life. These findings strengthen the argument that developing empathy from an early age is a crucial part of bullying prevention strategies, and the family is one of the primary settings for developing this ability (Stives et al., 2019).

Ultimately, parental role modeling needs to be understood as a continuous educational process that occurs through daily life practices. It's not enough for parents to tell their children "don't bully," but rather to demonstrate how to respect others, manage differences, resolve conflicts without violence, and demonstrate caring. This approach has important implications for family-based bullying prevention programs. Meta-analyses of parenting programs show that interventions involving parents can have a positive impact on reducing bullying and victimization, with factors such as parenting style, child empathy, parent-child interactions, and communication about bullying being components associated with program effectiveness. Therefore, role modeling should not be positioned as a stand-alone strategy, but rather integrated with open communication, empathy education, positive discipline, social and digital supervision, and emotional support. This integration enables families to build a parenting environment that consistently fosters prosocial behavior while simultaneously strengthening children's capacity to prevent, resist, and respond constructively to bullying.

Strengthening Empathy and Character Education

Research shows that strengthening empathy and character education are important components of parenting strategies to prevent bullying early on in Generation Alpha (Erwahyudin et al., 2024). Empathy helps children understand the feelings, needs, and perspectives of others, enabling them to consider more than just their own interests when interacting. In the family context, empathy is fostered through the practice of paying attention to others' feelings, helping family members, respecting differences, apologizing for mistakes, and discussing the impact of actions on others. Character education then expands this process by instilling the values of responsibility, caring, honesty, tolerance, respect, and justice. Thus, bullying prevention is not only directed at controlling negative behavior but also at building positive capacities that enable children to develop healthy social relationships (Salma et al., 2025).

Empathy is closely related to a child's tendency to engage in and respond to bullying. Children who are able to understand the feelings of victims are more likely to consider the emotional consequences of aggressive behavior before acting. Conversely, limited ability to understand another person's perspective can make a child less sensitive to the impact of insults, exclusion, intimidation, or other aggressive acts (Akmal et al., 2020). Therefore, parents need to make everyday experiences a learning space for empathy. When a child has a disagreement with a friend, for example, parents should not only determine who is right and who is wrong, but can also encourage the child to understand how each party feels, why the conflict occurred, and how to resolve it fairly (Ma'ruf et al., 2025; Mulyana & Rahman, 2026). This reflective approach helps children develop these skills, namely the ability to see a situation from another person's perspective. This ability is an important asset for children in developing prosocial behavior, controlling aggression, and resisting bullying.

Character education within the family also needs to be implemented consistently through the integration of values, habits, and role models. Character values will not be effective if conveyed only in the form of advice or prohibitions; they need to be translated into concrete behaviors experienced by children. Parents can teach children to use polite language, respect differences of opinion, help others, take responsibility for mistakes, and resolve conflicts through dialogue (Nurdahlia, 2023). When children engage in actions that have the potential to harm others, parents need to provide opportunities for them to understand the impact of their behavior and correct it (Mutathahirin et al., 2026). This process makes character education reflective and constructive, rather than simply punishing. In this way, children gradually learn that respect for others is a principle that must be applied in various situations, including when facing differences, competition, and conflict with peers.

Strengthening empathy and character education ultimately demonstrates that bullying prevention needs to be directed at developing children's overall character. Parents are not only tasked with preventing their children from becoming bullies, but also with developing their abilities to become caring individuals, able to understand others' perspectives, control their emotions, resolve conflicts peacefully, and courageously provide support to victims. This strategy is more effective when implemented consistently through open communication, role modeling, habituation, positive discipline, and support in social and digital interactions (Susanti, 2023; Brojanowska et al., 2026). Thus, the family can function as a space for character education that builds children's social and emotional resilience while creating a preventative foundation to reduce the risk of bullying in Generation Alpha.

Positive Discipline and Child Emotional Control

Research shows that implementing positive discipline is an important strategy in developing children's emotional control skills and preventing aggressive behavior that can develop into bullying (Idris et al., 2026, Mutathahirin et al., 2026). Positive discipline positions children as individuals learning to understand rules, consequences, responsibilities, and how to manage their behavior, rather than as objects to be controlled through punishment. In parenting practices, parents implement discipline through clear rules, logical consequences, two-way communication, providing opportunities to correct mistakes, and reinforcing appropriate behavior. This approach helps children understand the rationale behind rules so that compliance is not simply driven by fear of punishment (Darwin et al., 2025). For Generation Alpha, who face complex social and digital environments, the ability to understand behavioral boundaries becomes increasingly important as children encounter various situations that require decision-making and self-control.

Emotional regulation is a crucial mechanism linking parenting practices to children's social behavior. Children who are unable to recognize and manage anger, frustration, disappointment, or feelings of threat may respond to conflict through impulsive, aggressive behavior, or actions that harm others (Fauzan & Sulaeman, 2024). Therefore, parents need to help children recognize emotions before directing their behavior. When a child experiences anger, for example, parents can provide an opportunity to calm down, help the child name the emotion, and then encourage the child to discuss the causes and alternative solutions. This process transforms conflict into an opportunity to learn emotional regulation. Children gradually understand that anger is a normal emotion, but hurting others is not a justifiable way to express anger. Thus, positive discipline serves as a learning tool for self-regulation, not simply a mechanism for controlling behaviour (Suherman & Handayani, 2026).

Implementing positive discipline is also important because the way parents deliver consequences can serve as a model for children to emulate in resolving conflicts. The use of physical violence, threats, insults, or negative labeling can potentially send the message that the use of power and aggression is acceptable when someone holds a stronger position (Routray et al., 2026). Conversely, calm, consistent, and problem-solving-oriented communication provides a more constructive model for interaction. Parents can differentiate between the child as an individual and the child's behavior, so that corrections are directed at the action without undermining the child's self-esteem. For example, rather than labeling a child negatively, parents can explain that teasing or hurting a friend is unacceptable behavior and ask the child to consider the impact on the victim. This approach allows children to learn responsibility without feeling personally rejected (Norton & Duke, 2021).

In the context of bullying prevention, positive discipline also needs to be combined with empathy education and conflict resolution skills. When a dispute arises between a child and a peer, parents can help the child identify the problem, understand the other party's perspective, control emotional responses, and determine solutions that are not detrimental to the other party (Tfofi, 2009; Hakim et al., 2023). The child is then guided to understand the social consequences of their behavior and, if they make a mistake, is given the opportunity to repair the relationship through an apology or corrective action. This process fosters social responsibility while reducing the child's tendency to use aggression as a response to conflict. Thus, positive discipline is not only oriented towards compliance with rules but also builds the child's capacity to make conscious and responsible decisions.

Overall, positive discipline and emotional management demonstrate that bullying prevention needs to begin with a child's internal self-management skills. Children who are able to recognize emotions, control impulses, understand the consequences of their actions, and resolve conflicts constructively have a stronger foundation for building healthy social relationships (Astuti et al., 2025). Therefore, parents need to avoid a violence-based disciplinary approach and replace it with a firm but warm, consistent parenting style that respects the child's dignity. Integrating positive discipline with open communication, role modeling, empathy building, and digital support can create a more comprehensive parenting system to prevent bullying early on in Generation Alpha.

Social Environment Monitoring and Digital Activities

Research shows that monitoring children's social environments and digital activities is a crucial strategy for preventing bullying among Generation Alpha. Parental supervision involves not only knowing who children interact with but also understanding their relationships, activities, and experiences within their social

environment (Rustiya & Rahman, 2025). Parents need to recognize the characteristics of peers, play environments, school activities, and situations that could potentially lead to conflict or bullying. Consistent supervision allows parents to recognize changes in their children's behavior, such as withdrawal, mood swings, fear of certain environments, decreased interest in previously enjoyed activities, or the emergence of aggressive behavior. Therefore, supervision serves as an early detection mechanism, enabling parents to respond before issues escalate into more serious bullying (Rukmayana & Muthohar, 2025). However, supervision needs to be carried out proportionally and not become excessive control, which can reduce a child's confidence and independence.

In the context of Generation Alpha, social supervision is inseparable from digital activities because children's interaction spaces are increasingly connected between physical and virtual environments. Children can interact with friends through online games, chat apps, video-sharing platforms, social media, and various other digital spaces. These interactions provide benefits for learning and social development, but also open up opportunities for cyberbullying in the form of insults, threats, the dissemination of personal information, exclusion from digital groups, the dissemination of embarrassing images or videos, and derogatory comments. Therefore, parents need to have a sufficient understanding of the technology their children use so that supervision is not merely administrative but truly able to understand the risks children face. Effective digital supervision needs to be directed at mentoring, communication, and building responsibility, not simply restricting access to devices (Salwa & Qodriyaturosidad, 2026).

One important finding is that digital supervision needs to be built through clear family agreements and rules (Agustini et al., 2024). Parents can set limits on device usage time, the type of content that can be accessed, who can be contacted, personal information that cannot be shared, and actions to be taken if children encounter unsafe content or behavior. These rules need to be communicated through age-appropriate communication and understanding. Children also need to be involved in the rule-making process to develop a sense of responsibility and understand the reasons behind each limit. This approach is more constructive than overt supervision, as the primary goal is not simply to ensure children obey the rules but to develop children's ability to make safe and responsible decisions in digital spaces (Kamila & Zahratunnisa, 2025).

Supervision of the social and digital environment must also be accompanied by strengthening digital and social literacy. Parents need to teach children to differentiate between jokes, conflict, aggressive behavior, bullying, and cyberbullying. Children need to understand that actions perceived as jokes by the perpetrator can have serious psychological impacts on others. Furthermore, children need to know the appropriate steps to take when they are victims of or witness bullying, such as not responding aggressively, removing themselves from dangerous situations, saving digital evidence if necessary, using blocking and reporting features, and reporting the incident to a parent, teacher, or trusted adult (Sutisna & Tresna, 2025; Mundaroh et al., 2025). These skills are crucial to prevent children from being passive when facing bullying. Children also need to be encouraged to become *upstander*, namely individuals who dare to take constructive action to help victims without escalating the conflict.

Thus, monitoring the social environment and digital activities of Generation Alpha needs to be understood as an educational, preventative, and adaptive support process. Parents need not simply be aware of their children's activities; they also need to understand their children's interaction environment, establish open communication, set reasonable boundaries, provide digital literacy, and develop children's skills in dealing with the risks of bullying. This strategy will be more

effective when integrated with role modeling, empathy education, positive discipline, and strengthening emotional regulation. With an integrated approach, families can build a protective environment that allows Generation Alpha to use technology productively while also developing the skills to recognize, prevent, and respond to bullying safely and responsibly.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that parental parenting strategies play a fundamental role in preventing bullying from an early age in Generation Alpha. Bullying prevention is not simply achieved through prohibitions or monitoring children's behavior, but requires a comprehensive and sustainable parenting approach. The five main strategies identified include open communication, parental role modeling, strengthening empathy and character education, implementing positive discipline and emotional control, and monitoring children's social environment and digital activities. These five strategies are interconnected in building children's abilities to recognize bullying behavior, control emotional responses, understand others' perspectives, resolve conflicts constructively, and seek help when faced with bullying. The research findings confirm that the family is the primary preventive space in building the social, emotional, moral, and digital resilience of Generation Alpha. Parents need to transform from mere supervisors to educators, role models, companions, and facilitators of child development. Warm, responsive, communicative, consistent, and adaptive parenting can create an environment that supports the development of prosocial behavior while reducing the risk of children becoming perpetrators or victims of bullying. In the digital context, supervision needs to be directed at mentoring and digital literacy, not simply limiting technology use. Practically, bullying prevention needs to be developed through collaboration between families, schools, and the social environment by strengthening parents' capacity to implement positive parenting, character education, emotional regulation, interpersonal communication, and digital safety. This research contributes to the development of a family-based perspective on bullying prevention by positioning parenting strategies as the foundation for building children's resilience in facing the risk of bullying in both physical and digital spaces. Future research could quantitatively test the effectiveness of these strategies or develop family-based parenting models specifically tailored to the developmental characteristics and needs of Generation Alpha.

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