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Review

The Relationship between Mothering Patterns and the Incidence of Stunting: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Stunting is one of the global health issues that remains a major challenge, especially in developing countries such as Indonesia. Although its prevalence has decreased slightly from 21.6% in 2022 to 21.5% in 2023, this figure is still far from the national target of 14%. Stunting is caused by chronic malnutrition and recurrent infections, especially during the first 1,000 days of life (HPK). One of the factors contributing to stunting is maternal parenting, particularly in terms of nutritional fulfillment, psychosocial stimulation, and child care. This study aims to review the relationship between maternal parenting styles and the incidence of stunting through a literature review approach. The method used is a qualitative descriptive study by examining 10 quantitative research articles with a cross-sectional design selected from Google Scholar and PubMed based on inclusion criteria. The results show that most articles state that there is a significant relationship between maternal parenting and the incidence of stunting. Democratic and responsive parenting contributes to the prevention of stunting, while inappropriate parenting increases the risk. Therefore, strengthening parenting education is an important strategy in efforts to reduce stunting in Indonesia.

1. Introduction

Stunting is one of the global health issues that remains a major challenge, especially in developing countries (Bura et al., 2025). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 148.1 million children under the age of five were stunted in 2022, with most cases occurring in Asia and Africa. According to the Indonesian Health Survey & Health Development Policy Agency (2023), stunting can cause physical growth and cognitive development disorders that impact a person's future productivity and quality of life. In Indonesia, despite a decline in stunting

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prevalence from 21.6% in 2022 to 21.5% in 2023, this figure is still far from the national target of 14%. (SKI & Badan Kebijakan Pembangunan, 2023).

Stunting is a condition of growth failure in children under five years of age due to chronic malnutrition and recurrent infections, especially during the first 1,000 days of life (HPK), from the fetus to 24 months of age (Purwati et al., 2025). Stunting, also known as short stature, is a condition in which a child's height or length is not appropriate for their age. This condition is known as stunting if the Z-score (LB/A) or (BH/A) is less than -2 SD (standard deviation), which is caused by poor diet, recurrent infections, and lack of psychosocial stimulation. Even when the child is still in the womb and after birth, poor nutrition will appear, but developmental decline will occur after the age of two. (Nabila Maulidiana Putri et al., 2024).

In addition, another factor that can cause stunting in children is parenting patterns, especially mothers who have little influence on parenting behaviors that affect their children's health. This factor is inseparable from the parenting patterns applied in a family (Julyanti et al., 2025). Parenting is the interaction that occurs between children and parents, including the fulfillment of physical needs (food and drink), psychological needs (a sense of security and affection), and socialization. Parenting is one of the causes of nutritional problems or stunting. Parenting includes the family's ability to provide time, attention, and support in meeting the physical, mental, and social needs of growing children in the family. The role of parents is very important, especially mothers, in preventing growth and development disorders, particularly stunting in children (Maryam et al., 2024).

In the study Marlina et al., 2025, mentioning that mothers who have poor parenting patterns will have a negative impact on the growth and development of children, especially their nutritional status. This is in line with research Maryam et al., 2024, shows that inadequate parenting or attitudes and behaviors that do not provide adequate nutrition to toddlers can result in malnutrition, which can lead to disorders such as inappropriate weight and height, thinness, short stature, and even severe malnutrition in toddlers. Toddlers who experience stunting are caused by low nutritional intake. Parental care in meeting children's nutritional needs has a significant influence on the incidence of stunting. Hidayat, 2023 emphasizes that parenting patterns are closely related to the growth and development of children under five years of age. More specifically, malnutrition can cause stunted physical growth and, more importantly, delayed brain development. It can also lead to a decrease or weakness in the body's resistance to infectious diseases.

Given the high incidence of stunting in Indonesia, which is still far from the national target, and previous research evidence that parenting patterns have a major influence on child growth and development. Therefore, it is important to re-examine various research results that have been conducted using a literature review method, which aims to compile and analyze scientific findings from various national and international journals regarding the relationship between maternal parenting patterns and stunting, as a basis for strengthening promotive and preventive interventions in efforts to reduce stunting in Indonesia, particularly through a family-based approach.

2. Method

The method used in this study was a literature review with a qualitative descriptive approach. This study was conducted by searching for, combining, and analyzing facts and findings from various relevant and valid scientific sources. The literature search was conducted systematically through two open access channels, namely Google Scholar and PubMed, using the keywords "mothering patterns" and "stunting." The initial search results yielded 31,098 articles from PubMed and 56,600 articles from Google Scholar. Selection was carried out in stages by considering the inclusion criteria, namely articles published in the last five years (2020–2025), written in Indonesian or English, quantitative research articles with a cross-sectional approach, available in full text, and discussing the relationship between maternal parenting patterns and the incidence of stunting or related variables such as nutritional status, child development, and stunting prevention behaviors. Articles that did not meet these criteria were excluded from the analysis process.

The selected articles were then analyzed narratively, taking into account the research design, sample size, research location, data analysis methods, and the main results of each study. After a rigorous selection and analysis process, 10 articles were finally deemed most relevant and met all inclusion criteria. All collected data were synthesized and compared to gain an in-depth understanding of the relationship between maternal parenting patterns and stunting.

3. Results & Discussion

After searching for scientific articles through Google Scholar and PubMed, 10 articles were found that met the inclusion criteria for the review of research articles published between 2020 and 2025, as follows.

Table 1. *Hasil Literatur Review Jurnal*

No	Author and Year	Title	Data Collection Design and Methods	Objective	Findings
1.	Fitri Amalia & Joni Siahaan (2025).	The Relationship Between Parenting Styles in Children Aged 2–5 Years and Attitudes Towards Stunting Prevention.	This study used a quantitative research design with a cross-sectional method. The sampling technique used was non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling method. The analysis used was a Pearson correlation test conducted on 65 parents who had	This study aims to determine the relationship between parenting patterns in children aged 2-5 years and attitudes toward stunting prevention at the Tarumajaya Community Health Center.	The analysis yielded a p-value of 0.092 > α 0.05. This indicates that Ho is accepted and Ha is rejected, meaning that there is no relationship between parenting patterns and attitudes toward stunting prevention. This study shows that there is no relationship between parenting patterns in children aged 2-5 years and attitudes toward stunting prevention. (Amalia et al., 2025).

			children aged 2-5 years.		
2.	Alit Suwandewi, Yustan Azidin, Noor Khalilati, Hanura Aprilia, Izma Daud, Dea Salamiah (2024).	The Relationship between Parenting Styles, Knowledge, and Attitudes of Mothers and the Prevention of Stunting in Toddlers at the Tunas Segar 4 Health Center in Kelayan Selatan Village, Banjarmasin.	This study design uses cross-sectional correlation analysis. In this study, simple random sampling was used to select 66 mothers with toddlers aged 0-59 months. It was measured using a questionnaire with a value of r >0.361, tested with Spearman's rank analysis with a p-value = 0.05.	The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between parenting patterns, knowledge, and attitudes of mothers with the prevention of stunting in toddlers at the Tunas Segar 4 Health Center in Kelayan Selatan, Banjarmasin.	Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the statistical test using the Spearman rank test shows that there is a relationship between attitude and stunting prevention behavior with a p-value of -0.109 < 0.05, so Ha is accepted, meaning that there is a relationship between the variable of maternal attitude and stunting prevention in toddlers at the Tunas Segar 4 health center in Kelayan Selatan Village, Banjarmasin (Suwandewi et al., 2024).
3.	Sukmawati Paju, Ni Ketut Kariani, Nurdiana (2024).	*Parenting Patterns Of Providing Food, Picky Eaters And Food Diversity Against Stunting Incidents In The Working Area Of Kamaipura Health Center Sigi Regency*	This study is quantitative in nature, using an observational analytical approach with a cross-sectional design. The population in this study consisted of 219 toddlers aged 24-59 months, with a sample of 58 toddlers with stunting. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling.	The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between feeding patterns, picky eating, and dietary diversity on the incidence of stunting in the working area of the Kamaipura Community Health Center in Sigi District.	Based on the results of bivariate analysis using Spearman's test, all variables were associated with stunting (p<0.05). Multivariate analysis found that food diversity contributed most to stunting, with the highest regression coefficient (B-0.215). Most respondents had poor parenting patterns, were selective eaters, and lacked food diversity. There was a relationship between parenting patterns, food selectivity, and food diversity on the incidence of stunting, and the variable that contributed most to the incidence of stunting was food diversity (Paju et al., 2024).
4.	Arum Dwi Ningsih, Endang Yuswatiningsih, Dwi	*Exploring the relationship between maternal parenting styles and*	Using correlational analysis with a cross-sectional research design,	This study aims to analyze the relationship between	The analysis revealed that most respondents exhibited a democratic parenting style (52

	Prasetyaningati (2024).	*stunting prevention behaviors in children aged 3-5 years*	this study surveyed 128 respondents. Maternal parenting styles were assessed using a questionnaire with parameters for authoritarian, democratic, and permissive approaches, while stunting prevention behaviors were evaluated using a questionnaire covering cognitive, affective, and conative aspects. Data processing included editing, coding, scoring, tabulation, and statistical analysis using Spearman's correlation. Spearman's rank test was chosen because the variables were ordinal. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 25.	parenting styles and behaviors aimed at preventing stunting in children aged 3-5 years.	respondents, 41%), and most exhibited good stunting prevention behaviors (58 respondents, 45%). The findings of this study reveal a significant relationship between maternal parenting styles and stunting prevention behaviors in children aged 3-5 years in Kediri Regency, Indonesia (Ningsih et al., 2024).
5.	Beminate Lemma Seifu, Hiwot Atlaye Asebe, Bezawit Melak Fente, Mamaru Melkam, Zufan Alamrie Asmare, Angwach Abrham Asnake, Meklit Melaku Bezie and Yohannes Mekuria Negussie (2025)	*The effect of maternal high-risk fertility behavior on child nutritional status in Sub-Saharan Africa: a propensity score-matched analysis*	This study uses data from the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) from 26 SSA countries covering the period 2015 to 2023. The DHS is a nationally representative survey designed to collect information on key indicators related to population dynamics, nutrition, and health using a	To analyze the sources of change in the decline of chronic malnutrition among children in Burkina Faso during the 2000s, particularly in the context of improved health services.	More than two-thirds (57.14, 95% CI: 56.90, 57.39) of mothers engaged in high-risk fertility behaviors. In SSA, the prevalence of stunting, wasting, and underweight in children under five years of age was 30.58% (95% CI: 76.30, 76.72), 6.74% (95% CI: 6.62, 6.86), and 16.70% (95% CI: 16.52, 16.88). The Average Treatment Effect (ATE) of maternal HRFB on stunting, wasting, and underweight is 2.00, 0.30,

			community-based cross-sectional study design. A two-stage stratified sampling method was used to identify study participants.		and 2.19%, respectively. The Average Treatment Effect on the Treated (ATT) showed an increase in the risk of stunting of 2.12%, a decrease in the risk of wasting of 0.24%, and an increase in the risk of underweight. These estimates remain robust to hidden biases and indicate good matching quality (Seifu et al., 2025).
6.	Risa Nurhayati, Sefrina Rukmawati, Rahayu Budi Utami, Deppi Nurmalita, Pradita Ayu Rahma (2024).	*Parenting Style and Stimulation of Psychosocial Development on the Psychosocial Development of Pre-School Children with Stunting*	The research design used an analytical observational method with a cross-sectional approach. The research sample consisted of stunted children aged 3-6 years and their parents in Nganjuk District, totaling 150 respondents. Sampling was conducted purposively, and data were collected using the PSDQ questionnaire for parenting styles, EC HOME for psychosocial stimulation, and KMME for psychosocial development.	This study aims to analyze the influence of parenting styles and psychosocial stimulation on preschool children experiencing stunting.	The results of the analysis show a significant effect of psychosocial stimulation on the psychosocial development of stunted children, with a p-value of 0.001 (a=0.05). Responsive parenting and active parent-child interaction are very important in supporting child development. Therefore, it is important to improve children's nutritional status through appropriate parenting approaches so that they grow up with normal nutritional status and achieve optimal development in the future. (Nurhayati et al., 2024).
7.	M. Ainul Fikrih, Firdawsyi Nuzula, Roshinta Sony Anggari (2025).	*The Impact of Parenting Patterns, Waste Management, and Sanitation Facilities on Stunting*	The methodology used was quantitative analytical correlation research with a cross-sectional study approach. Samples were taken	This study aims to identify the effects of parenting patterns, waste management, and sanitation facilities on stunting in	Bivariate analysis results show that the highest incidence of stunting is very short, with 81 cases (62%). Statistically, there is a significant correlation between parenting style with a p-value of 0.017, waste

			sequentially or consecutively from the population during a certain period until the desired sample size was achieved; the period for this study was one month. Data were analyzed using the Chi-Square statistical test for bivariate analysis and ordinal logistic regression for multivariate analysis.	Wonoasri Village, Tempurejo Subdistrict, Jember Regency.	management with a p-value of 0.000, and sanitation facilities with a p-value of 0.017 with the incidence of stunting. Multivariate analysis showed that waste management had a significant negative effect on nutritional status, with a p-value of 0.000 and an OR of 29.168; sanitation facilities had an OR of 3.823; and parenting patterns had an OR of 1.926 (Fikrih et al., 2025).
8.	Tiara Rica Dayani, Muchsin Doewes, Muhammad Adrianes Bachnas, Paramasari Dirgahayu (2024)	*Parenting and Nutritional Status of Children Health: Results From A Cross-Sectional Survey*	This cross-sectional observational study was conducted in March-April 2023. The population consisted of toddlers and children aged 13-59 months who came for health checkups and immunizations and were selected at random. The research instruments used were questionnaires administered through interviews, weighing, and height measurements..	The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between parenting patterns and the nutritional status of infants at the Kasih Ibu Soesrini Midwife Clinic.	There were 96 samples in the study, with 65.6% of children having good nutritional status and 70.8% having good parenting practices. The chi-square test results showed a significant relationship between parenting practices and a chi-square value of 12.157 [p-value=0.001]. In conclusion, there were many children with good parenting patterns but less breastfeeding history. There was a significant relationship between parenting patterns and children's nutritional status. Good parenting patterns are very important for children because they affect children's nutritional status. (Dayani et al., 2024).
9.	Lisa Febrinda Nadhila, Astika Gita Ningrum, Muhammad Tri Arief Sampurna (2023).	*The Effect Of Parenting Style On Nutritional Status of Toddlers In Surabaya*	This study is an observational study with a cross-sectional approach. The study population	The purpose of this study is to analyze the effect of parenting patterns on the	Democratic parenting styles were most commonly observed (61.3%), while the majority of toddlers had normal nutritional status

			consisted of 685 toddlers and their parents, and a total of 75 people were selected using accidental sampling. Anthropometric measurements and questionnaires were used to collect data. The PSDQ (Parenting Style and Dimension Questionnaire) was used to identify parenting styles.	nutritional status of infants under two years of age.	(64%). Parenting styles in relation to children's nutritional status were examined using a chi-square test, which showed a value of 0.018. Conclusion: There is a relationship between parenting styles and the nutritional status of toddlers (Nadhila et al., 2023).
10.	Faza Nabila, Ariani Ariani, Safrina Dewi Ratnaningrum (2023).	*The Relationship and Factors The Parenting Style of Parents Who Married Early with The Development of Children Aged 1-5 Years*	This study used a cross-sectional analytical observation method. The research sample consisted of 203 respondents who were married under the age of 19 in 2017-2021 and had children aged 1-5 years using questionnaires and Denver II. Statistical analysis calculations used chi-square and path analysis.	This study aims to analyze the relationship and factors that influence the parenting patterns of parents who married early on the development of children aged 1 to 5 years in Tulungagung Regency.	The chi-square test shows a significant relationship between the parenting style of parents who married early and the development of children aged 1-5 years ($p<0.05$). Path analysis shows that early marriage parenting styles influence child development through education and number of children ($p<0.05$). Meanwhile, in terms of employment, income, and family support, early marriage parenting styles do not influence child development ($p>0.05$). Parents who marry early tend to apply authoritarian parenting styles, which can lead to poor child development (Faza Nabila et al., 2023).

Based on Table 1, a review of 10 research articles, a strong picture emerges that maternal parenting patterns play an important role in the incidence of stunting in children under five. The parenting styles practiced by mothers, whether in terms of feeding, psychosocial stimulation, or emotional closeness, have a direct impact on children's growth and development. The majority of

the studies reviewed showed a significant relationship between the type of parenting style practiced by mothers and the nutritional status of children, particularly in terms of stunting prevention.

The Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Stunting Incidence

Parenting patterns greatly influence the occurrence of stunting. Incorrect parenting patterns can result in stunted growth and development in children, for example, incorrect care patterns, a diet lacking in nutrients, or allowing children to play alone without supervision, which increases the risk of them contracting bacteria from biting objects or items they find (Rahayu et al., 2023).

Parenting styles can be categorized as democratic, authoritarian, and permissive. Democratic parenting has a positive effect on children's behavior. Parenting styles characterized by high responsiveness and low demands on children are called permissive parenting styles. Meanwhile, authoritarian parenting styles are characterized by parental interactions in the form of high demands on children and low parental responsiveness (Siregar et al., 2021). Inappropriate parenting styles, such as authoritarian styles that do not take into account children's psychological needs, or permissive styles without boundaries, can negatively affect children's nutritional status and development. This is reinforced by findings from (Nurhayati et al., 2024), which shows that children who are raised with a responsive parenting style and positive interaction have better psychosocial development, even if they experience stunting. Parenting styles are not only related to how children are fed, but also how mothers support their children emotionally, provide learning stimulation, and maintain their children's overall health. In a study by (Ningsih et al., 2024), It was found that democratic parenting styles are associated with good stunting prevention behaviors. This shows that when mothers provide healthy freedom accompanied by guidance, children tend to be healthier physically and mentally.

Research (Dayani et al., 2024), also showed similar results, where good parenting patterns were statistically significantly associated with children's nutritional status. This means that children who are raised with a balance of attention and discipline are less likely to experience nutritional problems such as stunting. Conversely, poor parenting patterns, especially those that do not pay sufficient attention to nutritional intake and health care, are very likely to increase the risk of children experiencing stunting.

The relationship between environment and culture that influences mothers' parenting patterns on stunting

Paju et al., 2024 emphasizes the importance of food diversity in parenting, as well as problems such as picky eating in children that are not addressed with the right parenting approach. These findings confirm that children's eating patterns depend not only on what is available, but also on how mothers guide and direct their children's eating habits. When children have a habit of being picky eaters and are not guided wisely by their parents, the risk of stunting increases. Foods with various nutrients are needed by toddlers for their growth and development. Toddlers will grow optimally if their food intake is sufficient, nutritious, and balanced. Inadequate food consumption in toddlers will cause them to suffer from malnutrition, because they do not get food that is appropriate

for their growth needs or there is an imbalance between their nutrient consumption and nutritional needs in terms of quantity or quality. (Lolan & Sutriyawan, 2021).

Furthermore, research Seifu et al., 2025 The findings from Sub-Saharan African countries show that maternal fertility behaviors, such as marrying young and having many children in close succession, are also related to children's nutritional status. Although the context is different, these findings can be linked to conditions in Indonesia, especially in rural areas, where early marriage is still common and contributes to suboptimal parenting patterns due to emotional unpreparedness and lack of parenting knowledge.

Child marriage is one of the triggers for stunting, especially in rural areas. According to UNICEF, early marriage is defined as marriage that takes place before the age of 18, which occurs during adolescence. Early marriage indirectly conflicts with children's rights to education, enjoyment, health, and freedom of expression. Early marriage has a negative impact on health, both on the mother during pregnancy and childbirth and on the baby or child who will be born. (Taufikurrahman et al., 2023).

Article Assessment

Most articles use a cross-sectional research approach with instruments such as the Parenting Style and Dimension Questionnaire (PSDQ) or questionnaires related to eating patterns and parenting. Although this approach provides a correlational picture, it cannot explain the direct cause-and-effect relationship. Therefore, further research with a longitudinal design or intervention studies is needed to strengthen the evidence of a causal relationship between parenting patterns and stunting.

Another limitation of the literature reviewed is that its geographical coverage is still limited and does not represent the full cultural and social diversity of Indonesia. In addition, most studies use small samples and non-random sampling methods, which can limit the generalizability of the results. Only a few studies use simple or stratified random sampling methods, which are more methodologically robust.

Efforts to Prevent Stunting

The implications of these findings suggest that efforts to reduce stunting are not sufficient through the provision of supplementary food or nutritional improvements alone, but must be accompanied by education on parenting practices for parents, especially mothers. Educational programs targeting mothers of young children should cover aspects of loving parenting, attention to child nutrition and health, and the provision of adequate stimulation appropriate to the child's age. In this regard, the role of integrated health service posts, community health centers, and health cadres is very important as the spearhead of family health promotion.

The government also needs to consider family-based interventions in its policy to accelerate stunting reduction. A multisectoral approach involving the education, health, and social protection sectors is needed to ensure that mothers have access to information, parenting training, and adequate social support. Parenting education should be provided not only to mothers, but also to fathers and other family members involved in child care.

4. Conclusion

A literature review of 10 articles shows that maternal parenting styles have a significant effect on stunting in children under five. Appropriate parenting styles, such as democratic and responsive styles, have been shown to support children's growth and development through good feeding practices, psychosocial stimulation, and emotional attention. Conversely, inappropriate parenting styles—both authoritarian and permissive—can increase the risk of stunting. Environmental factors such as food diversity, children's eating habits, and early marriage also influence the quality of parenting. Although most studies are correlational, the results consistently show that maternal parenting is an important factor in stunting prevention efforts.

The government and health workers need to improve education on proper parenting practices for mothers through programs at health posts and community health centers. This education should cover nutrition, stimulation, and the emotional role in parenting. In addition, cross-sectoral interventions and family support are also important to strengthen the role of mothers. Further research with longitudinal designs and broader geographical coverage is needed to strengthen the evidence of a causal relationship between parenting practices and stunting.

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