

Improving Discipline in Children Aged 5-6 Years through Serial Storybooks: Classroom Action Research at PAUD Nusa Indah V

Siti Nuraisyah¹, Astuti Darmiyanti², Nur Rochimah³

^{1,2,3} Early Childhood Education, Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang, Karawang, Indonesia.

Email: nrasyh0323@gmail.com¹, Astuti.darmiyanti@fai.unsika.ac.id², nur.rochimah@fai.unsika.ac.id³.

Abstract: Discipline in early childhood is reflected in children's emerging ability to follow routines, comply with agreed rules, complete activities, and use socially appropriate behavior in daily learning. This study examined the use of serial storybooks to improve discipline among children aged 5–6 years at PAUD Nusa Indah V. The study employed collaborative classroom action research based on the Kemmis–McTaggart cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection. Fourteen children in Kindergarten B (10 boys and 4 girls) participated. The intervention was implemented in two cycles, with four meetings in each cycle. The storybook series addressed three recurring domains of classroom discipline: time discipline, learning/activity discipline, and etiquette/routine discipline. Data were collected through structured observation, documentation, and field notes and analyzed using descriptive quantitative comparisons and qualitative reflection across cycles. The mean discipline achievement was 40.10% at pre-action, increased to 52.30% in Cycle I, and reached 77.02% in Cycle II. Thus, the increase was 12.20 percentage points from pre-action to Cycle I and 24.72 percentage points from Cycle I to Cycle II, for an overall gain of 36.92 percentage points. Qualitative observations indicated improved punctuality, rule-following, task completion, classroom routines, and polite behavior, accompanied by greater attention and engagement during storytelling. The findings suggest that serial storybooks can function as a developmentally appropriate, low-cost medium for repeatedly modeling expected behavior and supporting classroom habituation. Because the study involved one small class without a comparison group, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of classroom improvement rather than population-level causal effects.

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is a formative setting in which children begin to coordinate personal impulses with shared routines, expectations, and social norms. In this period, discipline should not be understood primarily as adult control or punishment; rather, it can be approached as the gradual development of behaviors that allow children to participate productively in classroom life, such as arriving on time, following directions, waiting for a turn, completing activities, caring for materials, and using appropriate manners. Indonesian early childhood research has long emphasized that discipline is most effectively cultivated through consistent, developmentally appropriate habituation rather than coercive practices (Aulina, 2013). This perspective is consistent with contemporary work on self-regulation,

which highlights young children's growing capacity to manage attention, behavior, and emotion in ways that support learning and social participation (Savina, 2021). Systematic reviews also show that self-regulation in preschool is malleable and can be strengthened through intentionally designed classroom experiences, especially when activities are repeated, appropriately challenging, and supported by adults (Day et al., 2022; Muir et al., 2023).

The pedagogical challenge is to translate abstract expectations such as "be disciplined" into concrete experiences that are understandable and memorable for five- to six-year-old children. Storytelling and picture books are well suited to this task because they present rules and consequences within meaningful characters, events, emotions, and sequences of action. Story-based character education allows children to observe how a character encounters a problem, makes a choice, experiences consequences, and repairs behavior without placing the child directly in a punitive interaction. In an Indonesian early childhood context, storytelling has been shown to provide practical opportunities for embedding character values in classroom activities (Halimah et al., 2020). Shared book reading research similarly demonstrates that books are not merely literacy materials: when adults discuss characters' emotions, intentions, and actions, story reading becomes a structured social-emotional learning event (Schapira & Aram, 2020). Teachers' prompts during shared reading can focus children's attention on interpersonal situations and elicit responses related to emotions, preferences, social expectations, and other aspects of social-emotional competence (Ng & Sun, 2022).

Discipline is particularly compatible with narrative instruction because many target behaviors are routine-based and sequential. A child can see, for example, a character arriving at school, greeting a teacher, storing belongings, following a classroom rule, waiting for a turn, washing hands, cleaning up, and completing an activity. These sequences provide models that can be revisited across multiple readings and connected to children's own classroom experiences. Direct evidence from Indonesia supports the use of storytelling for discipline development. Balimulia (2020) reported that a storytelling intervention influenced discipline outcomes in kindergarten children, while Nurjanah and Fauziyah (2023) documented improvements in early childhood discipline through a classroom action research intervention using storytelling with hand puppets. Harmita and Zulminiati (2023) likewise found that a culturally contextualized storybook intervention was associated with higher discipline-character outcomes among kindergarten children. Together, these studies suggest that narrative media can translate behavioral expectations into concrete, child-accessible examples.

Recent international evidence provides additional support for the mechanisms through which book-based activities may influence classroom behavior. Shared book reading has been associated with preschoolers' socio-emotional competence when adults and children actively discuss the social and emotional content of a story (Schapira & Aram, 2020). A recent experimental study found that socially themed picture-book reading can improve prosocial behavior and identified empathy as an important pathway through which story content may affect children's social conduct (Chen et al., 2025). A narrative review of interventions in nursery and preschool settings similarly concluded that shared book reading offers repeated opportunities to develop social and emotional competence when educators deliberately mediate the content rather than simply read the text aloud (Schapira & Grazzani, 2025). More directly related to behavioral control, recent research on dialogic book reading

indicates that self-regulation outcomes are stronger when teachers use interactive reading strategies focused on self-regulation rather than relying on exposure to themed books alone (Ezmeci et al., 2026).

The broader self-regulation literature also clarifies why repeated and teacher-guided storytelling may be useful. Effective preschool interventions tend to combine meaningful content with implementation features such as adequate repetition, adult feedback, encouragement, opportunities for autonomy, and consistent delivery (Day et al., 2022). Reviews of preschool interventions emphasize that program effects depend not only on what is taught but also on how frequently, how deliberately, and by whom the learning experience is delivered (Muir et al., 2023). Educator-focused research further shows that changes in teacher practice can produce gains in children's self-regulation when teachers are supported to embed regulation-promoting strategies in everyday classroom routines (Muir et al., 2024). Serial storybooks may therefore be particularly useful in action research because their content can be revised after observation, repeated across meetings, and linked immediately to the routines that children are expected to practice.

At PAUD Nusa Indah V, preliminary classroom observation indicated that discipline among children aged 5–6 years had not developed optimally. The observed problems were concrete and recurring: several children did not arrive at school on time, some did not consistently follow teachers' instructions during learning activities, and some did not greet teachers appropriately. The initial observation also indicated difficulties in other routine behaviors reflected in the classroom discipline instrument, including returning to class after breaks, completing and tidying play activities, following game rules, waiting for turns, queuing, handwashing, disposing of waste appropriately, and praying before and after activities. These behaviors affected the efficiency of classroom routines and suggested a need for learning experiences that were more engaging than verbal reminders alone.

The intervention developed in this study used serial storybooks rather than a single stand-alone story. The series was organized around recurring discipline themes—time discipline, learning/activity discipline, and etiquette/routine discipline—and was used repeatedly across classroom action cycles. After Cycle I, reflection indicated that children still needed stronger narrative support and greater engagement, so the story content was expanded with additional pages and examples in each series before Cycle II. This iterative adjustment distinguishes the intervention from a one-time exposure approach: the medium functioned both as a narrative model for children and as a flexible instructional tool that could be refined in response to observed classroom behavior. Within the literature reviewed for this study, evidence specifically addressing this combination of serialized discipline themes, repeated classroom implementation, and action-research-based revision remains limited.

Accordingly, this study aimed to describe the process and classroom outcomes of using serial storybooks to improve discipline among children aged 5–6 years at PAUD Nusa Indah V. The study asked whether discipline achievement would improve across pre-action, Cycle I, and Cycle II and how children's behavioral participation changed during the storytelling activities. The contribution of the study is practical rather than causal: it documents a low-cost, adaptable classroom strategy in which narrative modeling, repetition, teacher mediation, and reflection are integrated within routine early childhood teaching. The study also provides a more cautious interpretation of improvement by reporting percentage-

point changes and by distinguishing descriptive classroom gains from statistical significance or generalizable causal effects.

METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design and Setting

This study used collaborative classroom action research conducted at PAUD Nusa Indah V. Classroom action research was selected because the purpose was to improve an identified instructional problem through iterative cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection rather than to estimate a population-level treatment effect. The cyclical structure followed the Kemmis–McTaggart tradition of practitioner-oriented action research, in which evidence from one cycle informs modifications in the next cycle (Kemmis et al., 2014). The researcher worked in collaboration with the classroom teacher. The study consisted of a pre-action observation followed by two action cycles. Each cycle contained four meetings, for a total of eight intervention meetings.

B. Participants

The participants were 14 children aged 5–6 years enrolled in Kindergarten B at PAUD Nusa Indah V, consisting of 10 boys and 4 girls. The class was selected purposively because the initial classroom observations identified discipline-related behaviors that required instructional improvement. The unit of action and observation was the intact classroom; therefore, no random assignment or comparison group was used. The findings are consequently interpreted as evidence of change within this class across the action-research cycles.

C. Serial Storybook Intervention

The intervention used a set of serial storybooks designed to present discipline-related situations through simple narratives and visual illustrations. The content addressed three domains that were repeatedly discussed in the original classroom observations: time discipline, learning/activity discipline, and etiquette/routine discipline. During each meeting, the teacher used the relevant storybook series as the central storytelling medium and connected the behavior of the characters with classroom expectations. Children were encouraged to attend to the story sequence, respond to teacher prompts, and relate the examples to their own behavior. In Cycle I, the series was implemented in its initial form. Reflection after Cycle I showed that some children were still adapting to the activity, were not consistently focused on the story, and required intensive teacher guidance. In response, the storybooks were revised for Cycle II by adding pages and additional narrative examples to the time-discipline, learning-discipline, and etiquette-discipline series. This refinement was intended to provide richer and more repeated behavioral modeling while maintaining the same core instructional medium.

D. Observation Instrument and Data Collection

The primary instrument was a structured observation sheet describing observable discipline behaviors. The original instrument used four developmental categories commonly applied in Indonesian early childhood assessment: Belum Berkembang/Not Yet Developed (BB), Mulai Berkembang/Beginning to Develop (MB), Berkembang Sesuai Harapan/Developing as Expected (BSH), and Berkembang Sangat Baik/Developed Very Well (BSB). For reporting purposes, the indicators were organized into the three discipline domains used throughout the study. Time discipline included arriving at school on time

and returning to class after the break. Learning/activity discipline included bringing school equipment, completing play activities, tidying toys after use, following game rules, and waiting for a turn. Etiquette/routine discipline included washing hands before and after eating, queuing while washing hands, disposing of waste in the proper place, greeting teachers, and praying before and after activities. Data were collected through direct observation during classroom activities, documentation of the implementation, and field notes recording children's responses, engagement, and difficulties during storytelling.

Table 1. Discipline domains and observed indicators

Domain	Observed indicators
Time discipline	Arrives at school on time, returns to class after the break.
Learning/activity discipline	Brings school equipment, completes play activities, tidies toys after use, follows game rules, waits for a turn.
Etiquette/routine discipline	Washes hands before and after eating, queues while washing hands; disposes of waste properly, greets teachers, prays before and after activities.

E. Data Analysis and Reflective Procedure

Quantitative data were summarized descriptively as classroom percentages and compared across pre-action, Cycle I, and Cycle II. The analysis focused on absolute percentage-point changes because the study did not report inferential statistical testing. Qualitative observation and field-note data were reviewed after each meeting to identify recurring patterns in attention, participation, compliance with routines, and areas requiring teacher support. At the end of each cycle, the researcher and teacher reflected on both the quantitative classroom score and the observed implementation process. The Cycle I reflection guided the revision of the storybook content and the delivery strategy used in Cycle II. This integration of outcome monitoring and reflective modification is consistent with the improvement-oriented purpose of classroom action research (Kemmis et al., 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

1. Pre-Action Condition

Before the serial storybook intervention, the mean classroom discipline achievement was 40.10%. Most observed behaviors were described as falling within the Not Yet Developed (BB) and Beginning to Develop (MB) categories. Children showed inconsistent punctuality, difficulty following directions during learning activities, and limited consistency in etiquette such as greeting teachers. The observation records also indicated that classroom routines still required repeated adult reminders. These baseline conditions confirmed that discipline was an appropriate focus for classroom action and provided the reference point for evaluating change across the two cycles.

2. Cycle I

Cycle I consisted of four meetings using the initial serial storybook set. The mean discipline achievement increased to 52.30%, representing a gain of 12.20

percentage points from the pre-action level. The direction of change was positive, but the classroom had not yet reached a stable pattern of disciplined behavior. Children were still adapting to the storytelling format and to the expectation that the behaviors represented in the stories should be connected with classroom routines. Several children continued to arrive late, and some had difficulty sustaining attention to the story or consistently following the teacher's directions.

Qualitative observation during Cycle I showed that the teacher's role remained highly directive. Children frequently needed prompts to listen to the story, follow the sequence of activities, and apply the modeled rules. Improvements were nevertheless visible in several indicators, including greater willingness to follow play rules, wait for turns, complete activities, and participate in clean-up routines. The class therefore moved from a baseline dominated by BB and MB descriptions toward more behaviors categorized as MB and Developing as Expected (BSH). The Cycle I result was interpreted as an initial improvement rather than a completed outcome.

Reflection on the first cycle identified two instructional needs. First, the story content needed to provide more examples so that the messages about discipline were repeated without becoming a simple verbal command. Second, the stories needed to sustain children's attention more effectively. The researcher and teacher therefore expanded each book with additional pages and narrative situations while retaining the three themes of time discipline, learning/activity discipline, and etiquette/routine discipline. These revisions became the basis of Cycle II.

3. Cycle II

Cycle II also consisted of four meetings and used the revised storybooks with additional pages and examples. The mean classroom discipline achievement reached 77.02%, an increase of 24.72 percentage points from Cycle I. Compared with the pre-action score, the overall improvement was 36.92 percentage points. The improvement was accompanied by qualitative changes in classroom participation. Children were described as more attentive and enthusiastic during storytelling, more familiar with the routines connected to the stories, and less dependent on repeated teacher prompts.

The observed behavioral changes were most apparent in the concrete routines emphasized throughout the intervention. Children increasingly arrived on time, followed teacher directions during learning, and demonstrated etiquette such as praying before and after meals or activities. The classroom also showed better adherence to play rules, turn-taking, clean-up routines, queuing, and other recurring expectations represented in the observation instrument. The developmental categories observed in the class shifted predominantly toward Developing as Expected (BSH) and Developed Very Well (BSB).

The Cycle II pattern suggests that the improvement was not attributable to a single exposure to a story but emerged across repeated implementation, teacher mediation, classroom practice, and revision of the storybook content. The larger gain between Cycle I and Cycle II than between pre-action and Cycle I is consistent with the reflective decision to enrich the stories after the first cycle. However, because this action research did not include a comparison group, the data do not isolate the effect of the additional pages from other factors such as repeated practice, increased familiarity

with the classroom routines, or children's growing comfort with the storytelling procedure.

4. Cross-Cycle Improvement

Across the study, the discipline score increased at each observation stage: 40.10% at pre-action, 52.30% after Cycle I, and 77.02% after Cycle II. The pattern demonstrates a continuous within-class improvement over the intervention period. Importantly, the arithmetic difference between Cycle I and Cycle II is 24.72 percentage points ($77.02 - 52.30$), while the total difference from pre-action to Cycle II is 36.92 percentage points. These values are reported as percentage-point changes to avoid conflating descriptive improvement with statistical significance. The quantitative trend and the qualitative classroom observations converged in indicating better participation in time-related routines, learning rules, and etiquette after repeated use of the serial storybooks.

Table 2. Mean discipline achievement across action-research stages

Stage	Mean achievement (%)	Change from previous stage (percentage points)
Pre-action	40.1	—
Cycle I	52.3	12.2
Cycle II	77.02	24.72

Note. Changes are calculated from the reported class means; no inferential statistical test was reported.

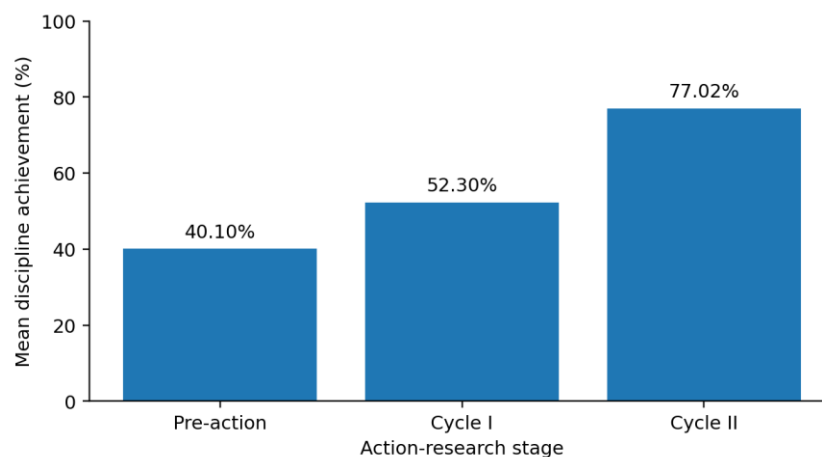


Figure 1. Mean discipline achievement at pre-action, Cycle I, and Cycle II.

B. Discussion

The central finding of this classroom action research is a steady improvement in observed discipline across the pre-action, Cycle I, and Cycle II stages. The mean classroom score increased from 40.10% to 52.30% and then to 77.02%, while field observations documented stronger punctuality, rule-following, task completion, routine participation, and polite behavior. The improvement is consistent with Indonesian evidence showing that storytelling can influence discipline-related behavior in early childhood. Balimulia (2020) found that storytelling affected discipline among kindergarten children, and Nurjanah and Fauziyah (2023) reported classroom improvements in

discipline after storytelling activities using hand puppets. The present study extends this practical line of work by using a serial-book format in which discipline themes recur across multiple meetings and the story content is revised after a reflective cycle.

The findings are also aligned with research on picture books as a medium for character learning. Harmita and Zulminiati (2023) demonstrated that a culturally contextualized storybook could support discipline-character outcomes in kindergarten, while Halimah et al. (2020) showed that storytelling can provide a practical vehicle for character education in early childhood. The likely value of stories lies in their capacity to make behavioral expectations visible and sequential. Children can observe a character's behavior, the social context in which it occurs, and the consequences that follow. This is particularly relevant to discipline indicators such as arriving on time, waiting for turns, following rules, tidying materials, and greeting adults because these behaviors are easier to understand when represented in familiar routines than when stated as abstract moral principles.

The larger improvement observed in Cycle II is plausibly related to the combination of repetition and richer teacher-mediated story content. Shared book reading research shows that socio-emotional benefits depend substantially on the interaction around the book, not on the physical presence of a book alone. Schapira and Aram (2020) found that socio-emotional discourse during shared reading was associated with preschoolers' socio-emotional competence, and Ng and Sun (2022) showed that teacher prompts during shared reading create specific opportunities for social-emotional learning. The Cycle I observations in the present study indicated that children were sometimes unfocused and needed substantial guidance, whereas Cycle II involved expanded story content and greater familiarity with the activity. This progression is compatible with recent evidence that dialogic, strategically mediated book reading can support preschool self-regulation more effectively than conventional reading of the same themed materials (Ezmeci et al., 2026).

A self-regulation perspective helps explain why the intervention may have supported discipline beyond simple rule memorization. Many of the observed indicators require children to inhibit an immediate impulse, sustain attention, remember a routine, or coordinate their behavior with peers and adults. Savina (2021) emphasizes that early self-regulation is central to classroom participation and can be promoted through intentional teacher practices. Reviews of preschool interventions similarly suggest that effective self-regulation support depends on both intervention content and implementation features such as repetition, adult feedback, engagement, and opportunities to practice behavior in meaningful contexts (Day et al., 2022; Muir et al., 2023). In the present classroom, the serial format repeatedly brought the same behavioral themes into discussion and allowed the teacher to connect them with real routines immediately before or after children were expected to perform them.

The findings also correspond with the broader literature on socially themed picture books. Chen et al. (2025) found that shared reading of social-themed picture books improved prosocial behavior in preschool children and highlighted empathy as a mechanism linking story exposure to behavioral outcomes. Schapira and Grazzani's (2025) review likewise indicates that shared book reading can promote social and emotional competences when interventions are developmentally appropriate and interactive. Although discipline is not identical to prosocial behavior or emotional

competence, these constructs overlap in the practical demands of classroom life: children need to attend to others, understand expectations, regulate behavior, and participate in predictable social routines. Serial stories may provide a low-pressure context in which these demands can be rehearsed symbolically before they are enacted behaviorally.

The action-research design contributed to the practical usefulness of the intervention because implementation problems were treated as information for revision. The first cycle did not produce an optimal classroom pattern, but it revealed that the children needed more engaging and elaborated story content. Adding pages and examples in Cycle II illustrates the core action-research principle of using observation and reflection to adapt instruction (Kemmis et al., 2014). This is important for early childhood classrooms, where the effectiveness of a medium depends heavily on how teachers use it. Research on educator professional learning similarly shows that changes in teachers' everyday practices can strengthen children's self-regulation outcomes (Muir et al., 2024). Thus, the storybook itself should not be treated as an isolated causal agent; the intervention is better understood as a package consisting of serial narrative content, teacher mediation, repeated exposure, classroom practice, and reflective adjustment.

Several limitations qualify the interpretation of the findings. First, the study involved only 14 children in one classroom and therefore does not support broad generalization. Second, the absence of a comparison group means that maturation, repeated practice, familiarity with the teacher's expectations, or other concurrent classroom experiences cannot be separated from the effect of the storybooks. Third, the study used descriptive percentages and did not report inferential statistical tests; consequently, the observed gains should be described as classroom improvement rather than statistically significant effects. Fourth, the source instrument did not report psychometric evidence such as inter-rater agreement or reliability, which limits certainty about measurement consistency. Finally, the study ended after Cycle II and did not include a follow-up assessment, so the durability of the discipline changes is unknown.

Despite these limitations, the study has practical implications for early childhood educators. Discipline-oriented storybooks appear most useful when they are tied to specific routines, discussed interactively, repeated across meetings, and followed by opportunities to enact the modeled behavior. The serial format also allows teachers to distribute character learning across themes rather than overloading one story with many rules. Future research should test the approach with larger samples, comparison groups, validated observation measures, longer follow-up periods, and systematic measures of implementation fidelity. It would also be valuable to compare conventional read-aloud, dialogic reading, and serial-story interventions to determine which components most strongly contribute to children's emerging self-regulation and disciplined classroom participation.

CONCLUSION

The use of serial storybooks was associated with a clear improvement in classroom discipline among 14 children aged 5–6 years at PAUD Nusa Indah V. Discipline achievement increased from 40.10% at pre-action to 52.30% in Cycle I and 77.02% in Cycle II, corresponding to an overall gain of 36.92 percentage points. The quantitative trend was supported by classroom observations showing better punctuality, compliance with learning rules, task completion, turn-taking, routine participation, and etiquette, together with stronger

attention and enthusiasm during storytelling. The improvement became more pronounced after the Cycle I reflection, when additional pages and behavioral examples were added to the time-discipline, learning/activity-discipline, and etiquette/routine story series. These findings indicate that serial storybooks can be used as a practical, developmentally appropriate medium for repeatedly modeling expected behavior and connecting character education with daily classroom routines. The study contributes classroom-based evidence that the usefulness of story media lies not only in the book content but also in repeated teacher mediation, opportunities for behavioral practice, and reflective refinement of instruction. Because the study involved a single small class without a comparison group or inferential testing, the results should not be interpreted as population-level causal evidence. Further studies should use larger samples, validated observation instruments, comparison conditions, and follow-up measurement to determine the magnitude and durability of the effects.

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