

FAMILY-CENTERED COMMUNITY MIDWIFERY CARE FOR MANAGING SIBLING RIVALRY IN A PRESCHOOL CHILD: A CASE STUDY IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Background: Sibling rivalry is a common psychosocial problem among preschool children, particularly after the birth of a younger sibling. The condition may result in jealousy, emotional distress, aggressive behavior, and difficulties in family adaptation if not appropriately managed. Family-centered community midwifery care plays an important role in supporting parents and promoting healthy psychosocial development in children. **Objective:** To describe the implementation of family-centered community midwifery care in managing sibling rivalry among a preschool child following the birth of a younger sibling. **Methods:** A descriptive case study was conducted in Bangun Rejo Village, Tanjung Morawa District, Deli Serdang Regency, Indonesia, from February to May 2026. The subject was a family with two children, including a five-year-old child who demonstrated signs of sibling rivalry after the birth of a five-month-old sibling. Data were collected through interviews, direct observation, family assessment, home visits, and SOAP documentation. Interventions included parental education regarding sibling rivalry, positive parenting counseling, emotional validation techniques, quality-time activities, and involving the older child in infant care. **Results:** Before the intervention, the child exhibited jealousy, frequent crying, anger, dependency, and attention-seeking behaviors. Following three home visits and family-centered interventions, notable improvements were observed. The child showed reduced jealousy, improved emotional regulation, increased participation in infant care, and more positive interactions with the younger sibling. Parents also reported increased confidence in managing sibling relationships and supporting the emotional needs of both children. **Conclusion:** Family-centered community midwifery care was effective in reducing sibling rivalry behaviors and promoting healthy psychosocial adaptation among family members. Continuous parental support, education, and active involvement of the older child in family activities are important strategies for preventing and managing sibling rivalry in preschool children.

Keywords: Sibling Rivalry, Community Midwifery Care, Family-Centered Care, Preschool Child, Psychosocial Adaptation

INTRODUCTION

Psychosocial development during early childhood plays an essential role in shaping children's emotional well-being, interpersonal relationships, and future social adjustment. One of the common psychosocial challenges experienced by preschool children is sibling rivalry, which refers to jealousy, competition, and conflict between siblings in obtaining parental attention and affection. The birth of a younger sibling often requires significant emotional adaptation by the older child and may trigger feelings of insecurity and emotional (Prameswari, Aditya and Saudi, 2024).

Sibling rivalry is defined as jealousy, competition, and conflict between siblings in obtaining parental attention and affection. Preschool children are particularly vulnerable to experiencing sibling rivalry following the birth of a younger sibling because they often perceive the newborn as a threat to their relationship with parents (Howe and Recchia, 2023).

WHO emphasizes that responsive caregiving and positive family interactions are essential components of healthy child development and psychosocial well-being. Children who grow up in supportive family environments are more likely to develop emotional regulation, social competence, and positive interpersonal relationships throughout life. Conversely, inadequate emotional support and family conflicts may negatively affect children's psychosocial development and increase the risk of behavioral problems, including sibling rivalry (WHO, 2023).

In Indonesia, the Ministry of Health (Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia) emphasizes the importance of monitoring child growth and development through family-centered and community-based health services. The national child health program promotes early detection of developmental and psychosocial problems among children to ensure optimal growth and development. Family involvement is considered a key factor in supporting children's emotional well-being, particularly during major family transitions such as the birth of a younger sibling (Jensen and Thomsen, 2024).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), early childhood is a critical period for cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioral development. Children require nurturing care, which includes good health, adequate nutrition, safety and security, responsive caregiving, and opportunities for early learning to achieve their full developmental potential. Therefore, strengthening parental knowledge and parenting skills is an important strategy in preventing psychosocial disturbances among preschool-aged children (Jeong *et al.*, 2021).

Research has demonstrated that sibling rivalry may contribute to behavioral problems, aggression, regression, anxiety, and reduced self-esteem when not managed appropriately. Preschool-aged children are particularly vulnerable because they are still developing emotional regulation and often perceive the newborn sibling as a threat to their relationship with parents. Previous studies have reported that positive parenting practices, parental involvement, and

family-centered interventions can significantly improve sibling relationships and children's psychosocial adjustment. Community midwives play an important role in promoting family health through preventive, promotive, and supportive interventions. (Buist, Deković and Prinzie, 2022).

In addition to addressing physical health needs, community midwives are responsible for identifying psychosocial problems affecting family members. During a community midwifery care program in Bangun Rejo Village, a family was identified with a preschool child experiencing sibling rivalry following the birth of a younger sibling. Therefore, this case study aimed to describe the implementation and outcomes of family-centered community midwifery care in managing sibling rivalry among preschool children (Novitasari, 2023).

Social and economic determinants further aggravate the situation. Poverty, low levels of education, inadequate sanitation, and limited access to clean water constitute major obstacles to creating an environment conducive to maternal and child health. In many settings, these challenges create an intergenerational cycle that is difficult to break, whereby maternal malnutrition negatively impacts child health and development, perpetuating the cycle of poor nutritional outcomes across generations (Nurmawan, 2025)

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive case study design using the community midwifery care approach. The study was conducted in Dusun VII, Bangun Rejo Village, Tanjung Morawa District, Deli Serdang Regency, Indonesia, from February to May 2026.

The participant was selected through purposive sampling based on the identification of sibling rivalry symptoms during community assessment. The study involved one family consisting of parents, a five-year-old preschool child, and a five-month-old infant. Data collection was performed through family interviews, direct observation, psychosocial assessment, home visits, and documentation using the Subjective, Objective, Assessment, and Planning (SOAP) format. Information obtained included family characteristics, child behavior, parental responses, and environmental factors contributing to sibling rivalry (Jensen and Thomsen, 2024)

The intervention consisted of family-centered community midwifery care, including education regarding sibling rivalry, counseling on positive parenting practices, emotional validation strategies, daily quality-time activities between parents and the older child, involvement of the child in caring for the infant, and positive reinforcement of adaptive behaviors. Data were analyzed descriptively by comparing behavioral conditions before and after intervention. Ethical considerations included informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation. (Suciati and Srianhuri, 2022).

RESULT

The study participant was a family residing in Dusun VII, Bangun Rejo Village, Tanjung Morawa District, Deli Serdang Regency, Indonesia. The family consisted of four members: father, mother, a five-year-old preschool child, and a five-month-old infant.

Both parents lived together and actively participated in childcare. The mother was the primary caregiver responsible for breastfeeding and daily infant care, resulting in reduced attention toward the older child. The preschool child had previously been the only child in the family and demonstrated normal physical growth and developmental milestones. However, after the birth of the infant sibling, several behavioral changes were observed by the parents.

The initial family assessment revealed signs and symptoms consistent with sibling rivalry. The preschool child frequently sought parental attention, became easily irritated when the mother was caring for the infant, and often requested to be treated similarly to the baby. Parents reported that these behaviors began approximately one month after the birth of the younger sibling. Several psychosocial manifestations were identified during observation and interviews, including: Frequent crying when parents focused attention on the infant, Jealousy toward the younger sibling, Increased dependency on the mother, Refusal to play independently, Attention-seeking behavior, Episodes of anger and irritability, Requests to be carried, fed, or treated like a baby, The family expressed concern regarding the child's emotional condition and requested guidance on how to manage the situation effectively (Ingka Kristina dkk, 2024).

During the first visit, a comprehensive family assessment was conducted. Parents received education regarding sibling rivalry, including its causes, signs, and potential impacts on child development. Counseling focused on understanding that sibling rivalry is a common developmental response following the birth of a sibling. Parents were encouraged to: Avoid comparing siblings, Provide equal affection to both children, Recognize and validate the older child's emotions, Increase communication with the preschool child (Sinaga, 2024)

During the second visit, family-centered interventions were strengthened through positive parenting counseling. Parents were guided to allocate daily quality time with the older child and involve the child in simple infant-care activities. The child was encouraged to: Assist in preparing baby supplies, Help choose infant clothing, Participate in supervised caregiving activities, Parents reported that the child appeared more enthusiastic and cooperative after being given responsibilities related to infant care (Prameswari, Aditya and Saudi, 2024).

The third visit focused on evaluating behavioral changes and reinforcing positive parenting strategies. Parents reported noticeable improvements in the child's emotional responses and sibling interactions. The preschool child demonstrated: Reduced jealousy toward the infant, Improved emotional regulation, Increased willingness to share parental attention, More positive interactions with the younger sibling. (Hasanah and Istiqomah, 2024)

At the end of the intervention period, parents reported greater confidence in managing sibling rivalry and understanding their child's emotional needs. The family successfully implemented positive parenting practices, including emotional validation, quality-time activities, and involvement of the older child in caregiving tasks. Overall, family-centered community midwifery care contributed to improved psychosocial adaptation, enhanced sibling relationships, and increased parental competence in addressing sibling rivalry within the family

Table 1. Changes in Sibling Rivalry Behaviors Before and After Intervention

Behavioral Indicators	Behavioral Intervention	After intervention
Jealousy toward sibling	Frequent	Reduced
Frequent crying	Frequent	Rare
Anger and irritability	Frequent	Occasional
Attention-seeking behavior	High	Moderate
Participation in infant care	Limited	Increased
Positive interaction with sibling	Limited	Good
Independent play behavior	Limited	Improved

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that sibling rivalry emerged as an emotional response to changes in family dynamics following the birth of a younger sibling. Consistent with developmental theories, preschool children often experience insecurity and fear of losing parental attention when a new sibling is introduced into the family. These emotional reactions may manifest as jealousy, regression, anger, and attention-seeking behavior. In the present case, the child demonstrated several classic manifestations of sibling rivalry, including increased dependency on the mother, frequent crying, and demands for attention. Such behaviors are considered normal developmental responses when children perceive a reduction in parental affection and emotional availability (Pfaffly, Carol Moore, 2024).

The present case demonstrated that family-centered interventions effectively improved the child's psychosocial adaptation. Education provided to parents increased their understanding of sibling rivalry as a normal developmental phenomenon rather than deliberate misbehavior.

This understanding enabled parents to respond more empathetically and appropriately to the child's emotional needs. Previous studies have shown that parental knowledge and positive parenting practices significantly influence children's emotional adjustment and reduce behavioral problems associated with sibling rivalry (Brown *et al.*, 2026)

Quality-time activities and emotional validation were particularly beneficial in strengthening parent-child attachment and reducing feelings of exclusion. These findings support previous studies indicating that children who receive consistent emotional support are more likely to develop positive coping strategies and healthier sibling relationships. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), responsive caregiving and nurturing care are essential components of early childhood development because they promote emotional security, resilience, and healthy psychosocial functioning. (Lee and Yeung, 2026).

Children who experience responsive interactions with caregivers are better able to adapt to family transitions and stressful situations, including the arrival of a younger sibling. Involving the older child in infant care also contributed to positive behavioral changes. Participation in simple caregiving activities promoted a sense of responsibility, belonging, and inclusion within the family (Canfield *et al.*, 2026).

Furthermore, the improvement observed in this case reflects the principles of Family-Centered Care, which emphasize collaboration between healthcare providers and family members in addressing children's developmental and psychosocial needs. Family-centered approaches recognize parents as primary caregivers and active partners in promoting child well-being. Through counseling, education, and supportive communication, parents became more capable of creating a nurturing environment that facilitated positive sibling interactions and emotional adjustment (Manurung, 2024)

The results of this study emphasize the important role of community midwives in identifying psychosocial problems and implementing family-centered interventions. Community midwives are often the first healthcare professionals to interact with families during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period, providing a valuable opportunity for early detection of sibling rivalry and other psychosocial concerns. Integrating psychosocial assessment into routine community health services may contribute to healthier family adaptation and improved child development outcomes (Astuti, Tianme and Susilowati, 2024)

Although this study demonstrated positive outcomes, it was limited to a single-family case study and therefore may not be generalizable to all populations. Future research involving larger samples and quantitative measurements is recommended to evaluate the effectiveness of family-centered community midwifery interventions in reducing sibling rivalry and promoting psychosocial well-being among preschool children.

CONCLUSION

This case study demonstrated that sibling rivalry is a common psychosocial response experienced by preschool children following the birth of a younger sibling. The child in this study exhibited various manifestations of sibling rivalry, including jealousy, attention-seeking behavior, emotional outbursts, frequent crying, and increased dependency on the mother. These

reactions emerged due to changes in family dynamics and the child's perception of reduced parental attention after the arrival of the newborn. Such findings are consistent with developmental theories suggesting that preschool-aged children are particularly vulnerable to emotional insecurity during major family transitions.

The implementation of family-centered community midwifery care was found to be effective in improving the child's psychosocial adaptation and reducing sibling rivalry behaviors. Interventions such as parental education, positive parenting counseling, emotional validation, quality-time activities, and involvement of the older child in infant care contributed significantly to positive behavioral changes. Following the intervention, the child demonstrated reduced jealousy, improved emotional regulation, greater independence, and more positive interactions with the younger sibling. Furthermore, parents reported increased understanding of sibling rivalry and greater confidence in managing their child's emotional and behavioral responses.

The findings of this study highlight the importance of adopting a family-centered approach in community midwifery practice. Family involvement played a crucial role in supporting the child's adjustment process and fostering a nurturing home environment. By empowering parents with knowledge and practical parenting strategies, community midwives can facilitate healthier family relationships and promote optimal psychosocial development among children. This approach is also in line with the World Health Organization's recommendations regarding nurturing care and responsive caregiving, which emphasize the importance of supportive family interactions for healthy child development (Wang *et al.*, 2026)

Based on these findings, community midwives are encouraged to integrate psychosocial assessment and counseling into routine maternal and child health services, particularly among families with newborns and preschool-aged children. Early identification of sibling rivalry and timely intervention may prevent the development of more serious emotional and behavioral problems. Parents should be encouraged to maintain open communication with their children, provide equal affection and attention, avoid comparisons between siblings, and actively involve older children in age-appropriate family activities. Healthcare institutions and community health centers should also strengthen parenting education programs focusing on child psychosocial development and family adaptation during the postpartum period (Buist, Deković and Prinzie, 2022)

Although this study demonstrated positive outcomes, it was limited to a single-family case study and therefore may not be generalized to broader populations. Future research involving larger sample sizes, diverse family characteristics, and quantitative or mixed-method approaches is recommended to provide stronger evidence regarding the effectiveness of family-centered community midwifery interventions in managing sibling rivalry. Such studies may contribute to the development of evidence-based strategies that support child mental health, family well-being, and community health services in Indonesia and other similar settings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the participating family for their cooperation and willingness to be involved in this study. The authors also thank the community

health center staff and academic supervisors for their support, guidance, and valuable contributions throughout the implementation of this community midwifery care program.

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