

TEACHER PARENTS COLLABORATION IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TO IMPROVE WELL BEING OF SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to comprehensively examine the concept of inclusive education, the role of teachers, the role of parents, and the importance of collaboration between both parties in improving the well-being of children with special needs. This research employed a literature review method with a descriptive qualitative approach by analyzing 20 relevant sources consisting of scientific journal articles and academic books published within the last ten years. The analysis identified several major themes, including inclusive learning strategies, parental involvement, teacher competence, communication patterns between schools and families, and the impact of collaboration on children's academic, social and emotional development. The findings indicate that inclusive education has a positive impact on the overall well-being of children with special needs when supported by effective collaboration between teachers and parents. Teachers act as facilitators who design adaptive and inclusive learning strategies, while parents provide emotional support and learning motivation. However, the literature also reveals several dominant challenges, particularly limited communication, differences in understanding regarding inclusive education and inadequate educational resources and teacher training. Therefore, continuous efforts are needed to strengthen the collaboration between schools and families in supporting the successful implementation of inclusive education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right that belongs to each individual regardless of physical, intellectual, and social conditions. In a global context, inclusive education is one of the growing approaches in an effort to ensure that all learners have equal learning opportunities. Inclusive education emphasizes that every child has the right to a quality education in the same learning environment without (UNESCO, 2017).

Inclusive education also contributes to educational equity and social mobility

(OECD. (2018). In practice, inclusive education relates not only to open access to education for privileged children but also to a change in the overall system of education. The education system needs to be able to adapt to the needs of diverse learners, both in aspects of curriculum, learning methods, and the learning environment. This suggests that inclusive education is not just a policy, but is a paradigm that places diversity as part of the educational process.

Privileged children are individuals who have certain characteristics that differ from children in general. The difference could be physical, intellectual, and social-emotional limitations that require a special learning approach. In this context, inclusive education gives special needs children the opportunity to study with peers at regular schools, so that they can develop both academic and social skills. Studies indicate that inclusive education has a positive effect on the development of special needs children. An inclusive learning environment can increase student participation in the learning process and strengthen student social interaction (Ainscow, 2020).

Furthermore, the more inclusive pedagogy approach can also provide a more open and respectful learning atmosphere (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Nevertheless, the success of inclusive education depends not only on the role of the school but also on the involvement of parents in supporting child education. Parents play a vital role in providing emotional support, motivation, and conducive learning environment at home (Hornby, 2011). Parental involvement significantly contributes to the psycho-educational development of children with special needs (**Error! Reference source not found.** Thus, collaboration between teachers and parents is one important factor in supporting the success of inclusive education.

Nevertheless, in practice, collaboration between teachers and parents in inclusive education still presents various challenges. Previous studies have generally discussed the importance of parental involvement and teacher support in inclusive education. However, research specifically examining collaborative relationships in inclusive early childhood education settings remains limited. In particular, there is still insufficient discussion regarding communication barriers between teachers and parents, differences in perspectives concerning children's needs, and the integration of home and school support systems in promoting the well-being of children with special needs. In addition, many studies tend to focus separately on the role of teachers or parents, rather than exploring how both parties collaboratively contribute to children's academic, social, and emotional

development. Limited educational resources, inadequate teacher training, and inconsistent communication patterns also continue to hinder effective cooperation. Based on these gaps, this study aims to explore more deeply the collaboration between teachers and parents in inclusive education and its contribution to improving the well-being of children with special needs.

2. METHOD

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method with a descriptive qualitative approach. Qualitative descriptive analysis was used to interpret the reviewed literature (**Error! Reference source not found.** The SLR method was used to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize previous studies related to collaboration between teachers and parents in inclusive education to improve the well-being of children with special needs.

The literature search process was conducted using several academic databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, and ERIC. The keywords used in the search process included “inclusive education,” “teacher-parent collaboration,” “children with special needs,” “parental involvement,” “inclusive early childhood education,” and “child well-being.” The search focused on national and international journal articles and academic books published between 2015 and 2025 to ensure the relevance and recency of the literature reviewed.

The inclusion criteria in this study were: (1) articles discussing inclusive education and collaboration between teachers and parents; (2) studies focusing on children with special needs in educational settings, particularly early childhood and primary education; (3) peer-reviewed journal articles and academic books; and (4) publications written in English or Indonesian. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria included: (1) articles unrelated to inclusive education; (2) studies focusing only on medical or clinical interventions without discussing educational collaboration; (3) non-academic publications such as blogs or opinion articles; and (4) duplicated studies from different databases.

The selection process was carried out in several stages. First, the researchers identified relevant articles through keyword searches in selected databases. Second, duplicated articles were removed. Third, titles and abstracts were screened to determine their relevance to the research topic. Fourth, full-text articles were

reviewed based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. From the overall search results, 20 relevant sources consisting of journal articles and academic books were selected for analysis.

The data analysis procedure used descriptive qualitative analysis. Literature review research allows researchers to synthesize findings from various relevant studies (Sukmadinata, N. S. (2017)). The selected studies were analyzed by identifying major themes related to teacher-parent collaboration in inclusive education, such as communication patterns, parental involvement, inclusive teaching strategies, teacher competence, challenges in collaboration, and the impact of collaboration on children's academic, social, and emotional well-being. The findings from the reviewed studies were then synthesized to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of collaboration between teachers and parents in supporting inclusive education for children with special needs.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The concept of education for children with special needs, inclusive education is an education approach that emphasizes the principle of equality and justice in obtaining educational services for all learners without regard for differences in ability or background. In this concept, special-needs children are given the opportunity to learn together with other learners in the same educational environment. Inclusive education aims to eliminate discrimination in the educational system and provide equal opportunities for all children to develop optimally (UNESCO, 2017).

Conceptually, inclusive education focuses not only on providing access to education for children with specific needs but also on requiring changes in the education system itself. Schools need to make adjustments to curriculum, learning methods, and learning environment in order to accommodate the learning needs of diverse learners. This goes hand in hand with the opinion of the (Friend & Bursuck, 2019) that says that inclusive education emphasizes the importance of flexibility in the learning process so that each learner can have learning experiences that fit his needs.

Moreover, inclusive education also aims to create a learning environment that values diversity. Through interactions between students with other students, the learning process can be a way to cultivate an attitude of tolerance, empathy, and appreciation for differences. (Loreman, Deppeller, & Harvey, 2005) explain that

inclusive education plays an important role in building an inclusive school culture, where all learners feel accepted and appreciated as part of the learning community. In the context of education in Indonesia, implementing inclusive education is also part of the effort to provide special needs for children. Inclusive education provides them the opportunity to get a good education and to help develop the academic, social, and emotional potential.

The teacher's role in inclusive education, teachers are one of the key factors in successful implementation of inclusive education. Teachers are also expected to provide adaptive assistance and individualized support for children with special needs in inclusive classrooms (Mustika, D., Romadan, S., & Jelita, W. (2025). In an inclusive educational environment, teachers not only serve as learning materials broadening, but also as facilitators that help learners develop their potential to meet their own capabilities. Therefore, teachers need to have adequate competence in understanding the characteristics of special-needs children and be able to implement adaptive learning strategies (Sharma & Sokal, 2015). In the learning process, teachers need to use a variety of approaches that can accommodate the learning needs of diverse learners. Teachers training influences teachers' attitudes and readiness toward inclusive education (**Error! Reference source not found..** One applicable approach is differentiated learning, which is a learning strategy that adjusts the learning methods, materials, and assessments to each student's capabilities and needs. Tomlison (2017) explains that differentiation learning can help teachers create a more inclusive learning process and give all students the opportunity to learn optimally.

In addition, teachers also have a role in creating a positive learning environment and supporting social interaction between students. An inclusive learning environment can help special needs children feel accepted and appreciated inside the classroom. (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011) states that teachers need to develop an inclusive pedagogy practice that enables all students to actively participate in the learning process. Teachers self-efficacy affects the implementation of inclusive teaching practices (Tan, R., & Amrhein, B. (2019).

The role of parents in supporting the education of children with special needs, parents play a key role in supporting the development of special needs education for children. The family is the first ward that gives children learning experiences,

so the support that parents provide can affect the child's academic, social, and emotional development. According to (Hornby, 2011), parental involvement in a child's education can have a positive effect on a child's learning, confidence, and academic achievement. Parental support can be manifested in various forms, such as giving study motivation, helping children with schoolwork, and providing a supportive home environment.

Furthermore, parents also have a role to play in understanding a child's specific needs. By understanding the child's condition, parents can provide appropriate support to their needs and help the child to develop potential. Epstein, (2002) explains that involvement in a child's education is not only limited to academic support but also includes emotional and social support that can help a child adapt to the school environment. In the context of inclusive education, parental involvement is also an important factor in building cooperative relationships with the school. Through good communication with teachers, parents can gain information about the child's growth at school and offer input on the child's learning needs.

Teachers and parents collaborate in inclusive education. Collaboration between teachers and parents is an essential component in supporting the successful implementation of inclusive education, particularly for children with special needs. Effective collaboration is not limited to general communication but involves continuous partnerships in planning, monitoring, and supporting children's learning and development both at school and at home. In inclusive early childhood education settings, collaboration can take place through regular parent-teacher meetings, individualized learning discussions, home-school communication books, digital communication platforms, parent involvement in classroom activities, and joint decision-making regarding children's educational needs and intervention strategies.

Teachers and parents have complementary roles in supporting children with special needs. Teachers contribute professional knowledge related to learning strategies, classroom adaptation, and children's academic progress, while parents provide deeper understanding regarding children's daily behaviors, emotional conditions, routines, interests, and needs outside school settings. Through active collaboration, both parties can develop consistent approaches in supporting children's cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral development. According to Epstein (2002), strong partnerships between schools and families can create more

supportive learning environments and improve children's educational outcomes.

In inclusive early childhood education, collaboration is particularly important because children at an early age require consistent support systems across different environments. For example, teachers and parents may collaboratively develop behavioral reinforcement strategies, communication techniques, or adaptive learning activities that can be applied both at school and at home. This continuity helps children feel more secure and supported, which positively contributes to their overall well-being and participation in learning activities.

Effective teacher-parent collaboration also contributes significantly to the social and emotional well-being of children with special needs. Children who receive consistent support from both school and family environments tend to demonstrate higher self-confidence, better peer interaction, and stronger motivation to participate in classroom activities. Emotional support and coordinated guidance from teachers and parents can help children develop adaptive skills and improve their ability to engage in social environments. As stated by Epstein (2002), collaborative relationships between schools and families can strengthen children's emotional security and learning engagement.

However, establishing effective collaboration between teachers and parents is often challenged by several factors. One significant barrier is the persistence of social stigma and cultural perceptions regarding disability. In some communities, children with special needs may still experience discrimination or be viewed negatively, causing parents to feel reluctant to openly discuss their children's conditions with schools. This stigma may also affect parents' confidence in participating actively in educational partnerships. Socioeconomic limitations also become important challenges in teacher-parent collaboration. Some parents may have limited time to attend school meetings due to work responsibilities, while others may face financial difficulties that restrict access to educational support services or learning resources. In addition, differences in educational background between teachers and parents can influence communication effectiveness and mutual understanding regarding children's needs.

Another challenge involves limited teacher training and inadequate inclusive education resources. Some teachers may not yet possess sufficient competence in

handling children with diverse learning needs or in building collaborative relationships with families. Furthermore, communication between teachers and parents is sometimes inconsistent, resulting in misunderstandings or lack of coordinated support for children. According to Ainscow (2020), inclusive education requires not only institutional support but also collaborative cultures that value shared responsibility between schools and families.

Therefore, strengthening teacher-parent collaboration requires continuous efforts from schools, families, and educational stakeholders. Schools need to provide inclusive communication spaces, parental education programs, and collaborative activities that encourage mutual understanding and active participation. By developing strong partnerships, inclusive education can better support the academic achievement, emotional well-being, and social inclusion of children with special needs.

4. CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review highlights that effective collaboration between teachers and parents is one of the most significant factors in supporting the success of inclusive education and improving the well-being of children with special needs. The reviewed literature consistently demonstrates that children who receive coordinated support from both school and family environments tend to show better academic participation, stronger emotional development, improved social interaction and higher self-confidence. The findings also indicate that collaboration is most effective when teachers and parents maintain continuous communication, share information regarding children's needs and progress, and work together in designing appropriate learning and behavioral support strategies.

The literature further reveals that successful collaboration in inclusive early childhood education requires more than occasional communication between schools and families. Collaborative practices should involve active parental participation, mutual understanding, shared responsibility, and consistent support across home and school settings. However, several challenges continue to hinder effective collaboration, including limited communication, differences in educational perspectives, social stigma toward disability, socioeconomic limitations, and insufficient inclusive education resources and teacher training.

The practical implications of this study suggest that schools need to develop more structured and inclusive partnership programs with parents. Schools can

strengthen collaboration by organizing regular parent-teacher discussions, providing family education programs related to inclusive education, utilizing digital communication platforms, and involving parents in planning children's learning activities and developmental goals. In addition, teachers need ongoing professional development to improve their competence in inclusive practices and family engagement strategies.

Based on the findings, this study recommends that educational institutions, policymakers, and families work collaboratively to build inclusive educational environments that value openness, participation, and shared responsibility. Future collaborative practices should focus on strengthening communication systems, reducing stigma toward children with special needs, and increasing access to educational support services for families from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Strengthening teacher-parent partnerships is essential to ensuring that children with special needs receive comprehensive support that promotes their academic success, emotional well-being, and social inclusion.

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