



## **The Strategy for Child-Friendly PAUD Institutions in Handling Children with Special Needs**

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### **Abstract**

**Keywords:** Child-Friendly Early Childhood Education; Special Needs Children

This study aims to describe the strategies of Child Friendly Early Childhood Education (ECE) institutions in dealing with children with special needs. This type of research is qualitative with a literature review method to analyse the strategies of Child Friendly ECD institutions in dealing with children with special needs, with the steps of topic identification, literature selection, analysis, and synthesis, resulting in an in-depth understanding to support the development of inclusive education practices at the ECD level. The research results were validated through literature references, ensuring the accuracy and precision of the research findings. The results show that Child Friendly ECD is a holistic educational concept, emphasising inclusivity, parental involvement, and increased educator competence to create a learning environment that supports the development of children, including those with special needs.

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Child-Friendly ECD strategies include a welcoming environment, adaptive learning methods, differentiation of learning, and active collaboration between institutions, children and parents.

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### Abstrak

**Kata Kunci:**  
PAUD Ramah Anak; Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus;

*Penelitian ini berujuan untuk mendeskripsikan tentang strategi lembaga Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD) Ramah Anak dalam menangani Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus (ABK). Jenis penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan metode kajian pustaka untuk menganalisis strategi lembaga PAUD Ramah Anak dalam menangani Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus (ABK), dengan langkah-langkah identifikasi topik, seleksi literatur, analisis, dan sintesis, menghasilkan pemahaman mendalam untuk mendukung pengembangan praktik pendidikan inklusif di tingkat PAUD. Hasil penelitian divalidasi melalui referensi literatur, memastikan keakuratan dan ketepatan temuan penelitian. Hasil Penelitian menunjukkan bahwa PAUD Ramah Anak merupakan konsep pendidikan yang holistik, menitikberatkan pada inklusivitas, keterlibatan orang tua, dan peningkatan kompetensi tenaga pendidik untuk menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang mendukung perkembangan anak-anak, termasuk mereka yang berkebutuhan khusus. Strategi PAUD Ramah Anak mencakup lingkungan yang ramah, metode pembelajaran adaptif, diferensiasi pembelajaran, serta kolaborasi aktif antara lembaga, anak-anak, dan orang tua*

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## 1. Introduction

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) has an important role in forming the basis of child development. A child-friendly PAUD environment is the key to creating a solid foundation for the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of early childhood. In the midst of the diversity of children's characteristics, the challenges that arise become increasingly complex when PAUD institutions must provide inclusive educational services for children with special needs.

A number of previous studies have illustrated how important inclusive education is at the PAUD level. The results of this research highlight the successes and challenges faced by PAUD institutions in providing friendly and inclusive education for children with special needs. Inclusive education theories such as the "Inclusive Education" theory emphasize the importance of creating a learning environment that supports all students, without exception (Wahyu & Jayanti, 2023).

Previous research regarding the strategies of PAUD institutions in dealing with children with special needs shows that an individualistic and inclusive approach is able to have a positive impact on the development of these children (Buli-Holmberg et al., 2019). Vygotsky's theory regarding the "zone of proximal development" and a collaborative approach to learning are also the basis for understanding how important social interaction and support is for children with special needs (Irshad et al., 2021).

However, in the context of Child-Friendly PAUD institutions, there are a number of problems that need to be considered. The first problem that is generally faced is a lack of knowledge and understanding on the part of teachers regarding the characteristics and special needs of these children (Wardhani, 2020). Teachers who are insufficiently trained in this matter can hinder the implementation of inclusive education and result in a lack of optimal support for the development of children with special needs.

Another problem often faced by Child-Friendly PAUD institutions is the limited availability of resources. Whether it is related to a lack of supporting physical facilities, a lack of appropriate teaching materials, or the inability of institutions to provide special support staff for children with special needs. This condition can harm these children in accessing education that suits the child's needs (Khaerunisa & Rasmitadila, 2023).

Apart from that, society's perception of children with special needs can also be a significant problem. Stigma and discrimination that are still inherent in society can influence the social interactions of children with special needs in PAUD institutions (Husna et al., 2019). This can create an unsupportive environment and make children feel isolated.

In this context, it is important to carry out this research. The importance of this research is also reflected in the increasing public awareness of children's rights, including the right of children with special needs to receive education that suits their needs. With a deeper understanding of the strategies that have been implemented by Child-Friendly PAUD institutions, it is hoped that this research can make a positive contribution in increasing the understanding and practice of inclusive education at the PAUD level.

Apart from that, it is also hoped that the results of this research can provide practical guidance for Child-Friendly PAUD institutions and other PAUD institutions in facing challenges and optimizing the potential of children with special needs. So, Child-Friendly PAUD institutions and the like can be pioneers in creating a truly inclusive educational environment, supporting the maximum development of every child, without exception. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the strategies of Child-Friendly PAUD Institutions in dealing with Children with Special Needs (ABK).

## **2. Method**

This research uses a library research method as the main approach to explore and analyze literature (Chiware, 2020) related to

the strategy of Child-Friendly PAUD institutions in dealing with Children with Special Needs (ABK). This approach is taken to understand the concepts, theories and strategies that have been implemented by PAUD institutions in providing inclusive education to children with special needs. The following are the steps applied in this literature review research method:

The first step in this research is to identify the main topic, namely the strategy of Child-Friendly PAUD institutions in handling ABK. This identification process helps researchers focus research on the strategic aspects that are the main focus. Once the main topic is identified, the next step is collecting relevant literature sources. These literature sources are taken from various media, such as scientific journals, books and scientific articles, which are related to inclusive education in PAUD institutions.

Next, researchers used literature selection. Literature selection was carried out by filtering the literature based on inclusion criteria, namely literature that specifically discussed strategies for child-friendly PAUD institutions in dealing with children with special needs. After the literature is selected, a literature review process is carried out. This involves collecting data from selected literature to form an in-depth understanding of the strategies implemented by Child-Friendly PAUD institutions in the context of ABK education.

The next step is literature analysis, where researchers analyze the literature to explore various inclusive education strategies that have been implemented, including learning methods, teacher approaches, and additional support for ABK. Information from the literature was then classified and categorized to develop a conceptual framework regarding strategies for Child-Friendly PAUD institutions in handling ABK.

Then the researchers synthesized and interpreted the results to thoroughly understand the strategy of Child-Friendly PAUD institutions in the context of ABK. This process involves combining information from various literature sources and interpreting the findings found. Next, the researcher compiled a scientific article based on the findings and analysis from the literature review. This scientific article includes sections such as introduction, theoretical framework, methodology, findings, and conclusions.

During the writing process, the researcher also created a conceptual framework that systematically describes the strategies of Child-Friendly PAUD institutions in handling ABK, based on findings from the literature. The research results were then validated by referring back to the literature that had been analyzed, ensuring the suitability of the findings with the research objectives.

### **3. Result and Discussion**

#### **a. Definition of Child-Friendly Early Childhood Education Institutions (PAUD)**

Child-Friendly Early Childhood Education Institutions (PAUD) are educational entities that focus on creating an optimal, supportive learning environment and paying attention

to the special needs of children in the early age range. This concept involves a holistic approach to child development, ensuring that every aspect, whether physical, cognitive, emotional, or social, is covered thoroughly (Adriani Tamo Ina Talu & Gomes, 2019).

The importance of education at an early age is not only limited to introducing basic concepts, but also providing a strong foundation for further development. In this case, Child-Friendly PAUD focuses its attention on the special needs of children, including children with special needs (Nurfadhillah et al., 2021). The child-friendly concept emphasizes creating a safe, comfortable and inclusive environment, where every child feels welcome and supported.

Within the Child-Friendly PAUD framework, theories related to inclusive education are a relevant basis. This approach focuses on accepting and providing equal opportunities for all children, regardless of their differences in characteristics or needs. Vygotsky's theory about the "zone of proximal development" shows the importance of social interaction and support in the learning process (Suardipa, 2020), which can be well applied in a child-friendly PAUD environment.

The results of previous research also provide valuable insights regarding the concept of Child-Friendly PAUD. Research by (Kresnawaty & Heliawati, 2019), for example, shows that inclusive learning in PAUD has a positive impact on children's development (Kresnawaty & Heliawati, 2019). Implementing inclusive strategies can improve the social interactions, cognitive skills and self-confidence of children, including those with special needs.

Apart from that, psychological theories of child development can also be linked to the concept of Child Friendly PAUD. According to Erikson, for example, early childhood is in the stage of autonomy vs. autonomy. shame and doubt (Puspitasari & Wati, 2018). A supportive and child-friendly environment will have a positive influence on the development of children's autonomy, including children with special needs, so that they feel capable of coping with developmental tasks.

Child-Friendly PAUD also includes special strategies for handling children with special needs. In this context, special education theories become relevant. An individualistic approach model that focuses on the unique needs and potential of each child can be integrated well. Research conducted by Magpiroh & Mudzakar shows that implementing an individualistic approach can increase the effectiveness of learning for children with special needs in PAUD (Magpiroh & Mudzafar, 2023).

In practice, Child Friendly PAUD applies various strategies. For example, the integration of children with special needs into regular learning activities, the use of adapted teaching materials, and the involvement of parents in supporting children's development (Darmawati et al., 2024). This strategy

aims to create an inclusive environment that allows children with special needs to be actively involved in the teaching and learning process (Inayati & Trianingsih, 2019).

Furthermore, the importance of support from trained teaching staff is also an integral part of the child-friendly PAUD concept. Teachers who understand the characteristics and needs of children with special needs can provide more effective guidance and overcome challenges that may arise in the learning process. Research (Agung Hidayatulloh & Laily Fauziah, 2020), found that parental involvement has a significant role in supporting the development of children with special needs in PAUD. Good collaboration between PAUD institutions and parents can create a holistic environment where children feel thoroughly supported, both at school and at home (Ahmad et al., 2024).

The concept of Child-Friendly PAUD can also be emphasized through the results of other research, which emphasizes the importance of individualistic approach strategies towards children with special needs in PAUD institutions (Yunitasari et al., 2023). The results of this research indicate that children with special needs respond positively to an approach that understands their individual uniqueness and needs (Yusma Dewi et al., 2022). In order to implement this concept, Child-Friendly PAUD institutions can apply various inclusive learning methods. For example, the implementation of project-based learning, the use of adapted learning aids, and an emphasis on positive social interactions between children, including those with special needs.

Furthermore, this concept can be linked to the positive psychology approach in early childhood education. In this context, research by (Widhiati et al., 2022) highlights the importance of creating positive learning experiences for children. For children with special needs in PAUD, this positive experience is very necessary to increase learning motivation and build self-confidence.

Previous research also shows that integrating technology in learning can be an effective strategy in supporting children with special needs in PAUD institutions. Technology can be used to provide adapted teaching materials, provide visual modeling, and facilitate communication for children who may have verbal difficulties. In this case, the Child-Friendly PAUD concept creates a balance between the application of technology as a learning aid and an emphasis on social interaction. The results of research by (Lestari et al., 2024) show that the use of technology can provide significant benefits in increasing the learning involvement and achievement of children with special needs.

However, the challenge often faced by Child-Friendly PAUD institutions is the lack of knowledge and skills of teaching staff in implementing inclusive strategies. Research by

Sukmadinata (Murniarti & Anastasia, 2016) shows that training and skills development for teachers is very important so that they can recognize, understand and respond appropriately to the needs of children with special needs. In this context, the Child-Friendly PAUD concept can strengthen the urgency of continuous training for teaching staff, including empowering educators in facing challenges that arise in an inclusive context. This strengthening can be done through collaboration with training institutions, research and inclusive education practices.

As a concept that continues to develop, Child-Friendly PAUD can also be integrated with inclusive education policy efforts at the national level. This concept can be a practical guide for policy makers in developing inclusive education programs that are more effective and accessible to children with special needs at all levels of society.

#### **b. The Understanding of Children with Special Needs**

Children with Special Needs (ABK) refer to children who need additional attention and support in their learning and development process, because they face certain obstacles or challenges. This concept arises from the understanding that each child is unique, and the need for an approach that is inclusive and responsive to that individual's needs. This understanding involves a deep understanding of the variations in children's needs, both in physical, cognitive, emotional and social aspects (Lestari et al., 2024).

In understanding the concept of ABK, child development theory is a relevant basis. One of the figures who made a major contribution to the theory of child development was Jean Piaget. According to Piaget, children's cognitive development involves universal stages, however, children with special needs may experience different developmental processes (Piaget, 1976). This theoretical study can provide insight into how children with special needs can overcome cognitive challenges and how learning approaches can be adapted to support their development.

Another approach to understanding the ABK concept can be found in Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. This theory emphasizes that children's development is influenced by micro and macro systems in their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Children with special needs, with their special conditions, may require adjustments at various levels of their environment, from family, school, to society. Understanding these complex interactions helps design a holistic approach to supporting child development.

As understanding of children's needs develops, there are also previous studies that highlight the various special conditions that can be faced by ABK. For example, research by (Allo, 2022) identified variations in the motor development of children with special needs, which require special attention in designing

intervention and support programs. Furthermore, the ABK concept is also closely related to the human rights perspective. Children with special needs have the same right to receive education that suits their needs (Frans Laka Lazar, 2020). This understanding is in accordance with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child published by the UN, which confirms the right of every child to receive an education that enables the full development of his or her potential.

In the context of previous studies, research by (Budianto, 2023) highlights the need to understand inclusivity in education, which involves all children regardless of their characteristics or needs. Inclusive education is directed at creating an environment that supports the success of all students, including ABK. This approach creates a conceptual foundation that supports the ABK concept in the educational context. The importance of an inclusive and responsive approach to children's needs can also be found in research by (Asdaningsih & Erviana, 2022). This research highlights that a school environment that supports inclusivity can strengthen the self-confidence and learning motivation of children with special needs.

The concept of ABK can also be understood through the lens of diversity theory. This theory emphasizes that each child is unique and these differences should be respected and adapted to relevant learning approaches. Through diversity theory, this concept reinforces the importance of adapting and responding to the unique characteristics and needs of each crew member. In understanding the ABK concept, a number of special conditions such as autism, dyslexia, ADHD, and hearing or vision disorders are the focus point. Research by (Nur Akmalia et al., 2023) shows that children with dyslexia, for example, require special learning approaches that understand the unique characteristics of the disorder.

Apart from that, the ABK concept approach can also be seen through the lens of positive psychology. This theory emphasizes identifying and developing children's strengths, not just focusing on weaknesses or obstacles. Through this approach, the ABK concept is not only focused on needs, but also on the unique potential and capacities that each child has. The importance of parental involvement in supporting the development of ABK is also an integral part of this concept. The results show that parents play a key role in providing emotional, social and academic support to children with special needs (Putri & Lutfianawati, 2021). Therefore, the ABK concept approach must include strategies for building strong partnerships between schools and families.

Strategy for Child-Friendly PAUD Institutions in Handling Children with Special Needs. Child-Friendly Early Childhood Education Institutions (PAUD) are an approach in the world of education that focuses on creating a learning environment that



is inclusive, supportive and considers the special needs of children, including children with special needs (ABK). This concept involves certain strategies and principles in providing education that can accommodate diversity and uniqueness. In this context, the Child-Friendly PAUD strategy does not only include the implementation of inclusive policies, but also involves aspects such as the use of adaptive learning methods, involving parents, and increasing the competence of teaching staff.

The importance of inclusive education in child-friendly PAUD institutions is reflected in the understanding that every child, without exception, has the right to receive quality education in accordance with their needs and potential. This concept is closely related to the theory of inclusive education which emphasizes the acceptance and participation of children with all their uniqueness and differences.

Inclusive education theory provides the conceptual basis for Child-Friendly PAUD. Inclusive education emphasizes providing equal rights and opportunities for children with special needs to access meaningful and developmentally appropriate learning. This concept creates a philosophical basis for a Child-Friendly PAUD strategy that focuses on inclusivity (Anggita Sakti, 2020).

The Child-Friendly PAUD strategy in dealing with ABK involves a holistic approach to children's learning and development. One of the main strategies is to create a welcoming and inclusive environment. Based on Vygotsky's theory of the "zone of proximal development," children, including ABK, can reach their maximum potential if placed in an environment that supports and stimulates their development.

The research by (Bachtiar, 2020) shows that providing a child-friendly and inclusive environment in PAUD can increase the involvement and participation of children, including those with special needs. This strategy includes providing appropriate facilities, paying attention to accessibility, and creating an atmosphere that encourages positive interactions between children.

The use of diverse and adaptive learning methods is also a key Child-Friendly PAUD strategy. Piaget's theory regarding the stages of children's cognitive development emphasizes the importance of aligning learning methods with the child's level of development. In this context, research by Piaget (1970) and Bruner (1960) strengthens the argument that the use of learning methods that are appropriate to the child's developmental stage can increase understanding and acceptance of subject matter.

Apart from that, Child Friendly PAUD also implements learning differentiation strategies to meet the needs of various children, including ABK. Learning differentiation theory highlights the importance of designing learning experiences that suit the needs and level of readiness of each child (Ria &

Mukhibat, 2020). This strategy is applied in Child-Friendly PAUD to ensure that each child can participate in learning according to their own tempo and learning style.

Parental involvement is also an integral part of the Child-Friendly PAUD strategy. In the context of inclusive education, involving parents is considered a strategic step to create partnerships between PAUD institutions and children's families. Research by (Mas et al., 2024) found that involving parents can increase their understanding of children's special needs, thereby supporting the implementation of inclusive learning strategies at home. This collaboration can also create a consistent environment between school and home, providing additional support for the development of children with special needs.

Furthermore, strengthening the competency of teaching staff is a crucial strategy for Child-Friendly PAUD. Research by (Hakim et al., 2023) highlights the need to increase teachers' knowledge and skills in identifying, planning and implementing inclusive learning. The theory of teacher professional development strengthens the argument that improving the quality of education requires investment in developing the skills and knowledge of teaching staff. To implement inclusive strategies, educators need to understand the special needs of each child, adapt learning methods, and involve parents in the learning process. Increasing teacher competency also supports the creation of a learning environment that is responsive to the needs of various children, including ABK.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Child-Friendly PAUD is a holistic education concept, focusing on inclusivity, parental involvement, and increasing the competency of teaching staff to create a learning environment that supports the development of children, including those with special needs. Child-Friendly PAUD strategies include a friendly environment, adaptive learning methods, learning differentiation, and active collaboration between institutions, children and parents. Through the application of inclusive education theories, child development psychology, and a holistic approach, this concept is not only a place of learning, but also a space for inclusive growth for every child, making the education of children with special needs an integral part of the vision of an inclusive and future education. competitive.

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