

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS' STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING THE DYNAMICS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan strategi guru Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD) dalam menghadapi dinamika pendidikan inklusif di TK Nusa Indah Kota Palembang. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan metode studi kasus. Subjek penelitian meliputi kepala sekolah, guru kelas, orang tua murid reguler, dan orang tua anak berkebutuhan khusus (ABK). Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan tahapan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan inklusif diterapkan dengan menggabungkan anak reguler dan ABK dalam satu kelas. Guru menerapkan berbagai strategi pembelajaran, seperti bermain, bernyanyi, bercerita, penggunaan media visual, serta pendampingan bertahap yang disesuaikan dengan kebutuhan dan kemampuan setiap anak. Pendampingan dilakukan melalui arahan berulang, bantuan selama proses pembelajaran, dan pemberian perhatian khusus agar anak dapat berpartisipasi secara optimal. Selain itu, guru menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang aman, nyaman, dan kondusif melalui pembiasaan sikap saling menghargai, kerja sama, dan interaksi sosial yang positif. Pelaksanaan pendidikan inklusif juga didukung oleh kolaborasi yang baik antara guru, orang tua, dan pihak sekolah dalam memantau serta mendukung perkembangan anak. Dengan demikian, strategi pembelajaran yang fleksibel, pendampingan individual, lingkungan kelas yang positif, serta kemitraan sekolah dan orang tua menjadi faktor utama keberhasilan pendidikan inklusif di TK Nusa Indah Kota Palembang.

Kata kunci: Strategi guru, Pendidikan inklusif, PAUD, Anak berkebutuhan khusus, pendampingan

Abstract

This study aimed to describe the strategies employed by early childhood education (ECE) teachers in addressing the dynamics of inclusive education at TK Nusa Indah, Palembang City. A descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design was employed. The participants included the principal, classroom teachers, parents of typically developing children, and parents of children with special needs. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that inclusive education at TK Nusa Indah is implemented by integrating typically developing children and children with special needs into the same classroom. To address the diverse learning needs, teachers applied various instructional strategies, including play-based learning, singing, storytelling, visual media, and gradual individualized assistance tailored to each child's abilities. Teachers provided repeated guidance, learning support during classroom activities, and individualized attention to help children actively participate in learning. In addition, they fostered a safe, supportive, and inclusive classroom environment by promoting mutual respect, cooperation, and positive social interaction among students. The implementation of inclusive education was further strengthened through close collaboration among teachers, parents, and the school in monitoring and supporting children's development. Overall, flexible teaching strategies, individualized support, a positive classroom climate, and strong school parent collaboration were identified as key factors supporting successful inclusive education.

Keywords: teacher strategies, inclusive education, early childhood education, children with special needs, support.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a planned and systematic effort to create an environment and learning process that enables learners to develop their potential optimally. Substantively, education aims to actualize individuals' innate physical and psychological potential in harmony with cultural values and social norms. Considering the strategic role of education in character development, early childhood represents a crucial stage that requires special attention. Therefore, Early Childhood Education (ECE) is an educational level that focuses on stimulating children's growth and development according to their developmental stages and individual needs. The principle of inclusivity is an integral part of this effort, including for children with special needs. As explained by (Kh & Wahid, 2021), inclusive education is a form of educational provision that integrates children with special needs and typically developing children within the same learning environment without discrimination. Similarly, (Mustika et al., 2023) stated that inclusive education is an approach that upholds the values of justice and equality for all learners. Through this principle, every child, including those with special needs, has the right to equal opportunities and learning spaces to develop. According to (Alfikri et al., 2022), inclusive education is a transformative approach that focuses on improving the education system by eliminating barriers that may prevent students from participating actively and fully in the learning process.

Although the policy framework for inclusive education has been established, its implementation at the Early Childhood Education level in Indonesia continues to face various systemic challenges. Field conditions indicate that teacher readiness remains one of the major obstacles. Many ECE teachers have not received comprehensive training in inclusive pedagogy, making it difficult for them to manage heterogeneous classrooms effectively. Limited facilities and infrastructure, insufficient environmental support, and inadequate practical policies, particularly in suburban and rural areas, further complicate these challenges. These complexities have been intensified by post-pandemic conditions, which disrupted children's social adaptation processes. Previous studies have highlighted these issues. (Hasanah & Zailani, 2025) emphasized that limited facilities and teachers' competencies are the primary barriers to inclusive education, although these challenges can be addressed through adaptive learning environments and inclusive learning media. Likewise, (Utami et al., 2025) stressed the urgency of strengthening teachers' pedagogical competence in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum that is responsive to the learning needs of every individual.

Based on preliminary observations conducted at TK Nusa Indah, Palembang, during the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, it was found that teachers still encountered significant challenges in adapting instructional methods to the unique characteristics of children with special needs. This phenomenon indicates a gap between the ideal policy and its implementation in classroom practice. This condition is important to investigate because teachers' strategies play a fundamental role in realizing effective inclusive learning, ensuring that both typically developing children and children with special needs receive equal learning opportunities according to their individual needs. Therefore, an in-depth investigation of teachers' strategies in managing the dynamics of inclusive education is required to create a supportive and equitable learning environment for all learners. Based on this background, the present study is entitled "Early Childhood Education Teachers' Strategies in Addressing the Dynamics of Inclusive Education."

According to (Harahap & Ndonga, 2025), inclusive education is defined as an educational system that integrates all learners, including individuals with special needs and those from diverse backgrounds, into the same learning ecosystem without segregation. (Susilowati et al., 2022) further emphasized that the essence of inclusive education is the effort to establish a warm and welcoming society that embraces all individuals and is free from discrimination. Through inclusive education, the government seeks to ensure that every citizen has equal access to quality education. According to (Irvan & Jauhari, 2018, as cited in Susanti & Herawati, 2024), this policy provides opportunities for both children with special needs and typically developing students to learn together for a better future without discrimination. Furthermore, (Yunus et al., 2023) asserted that inclusive education has become a crucial global concern because it is rooted in the fulfillment of fundamental human rights. Therefore, both typically developing children and children with special needs deserve equal opportunities, space, and time to grow and learn together in the same educational environment. Akhiruddin (2015, as cited in Budianto, 2023) also emphasized that inclusive education is founded upon the principle of justice, whereby every child, including children with special needs, has an equal right to receive quality education. In line with this perspective, the implementation of inclusive education has enabled formal schools to provide equal opportunities for children with special needs to develop their potential alongside their peers within the same educational setting (Utami, 2020, as cited in Putri et al., 2025, p. 541). Moreover, (Ni'mah et al., 2024) highlighted that inclusive education provides children with special needs the opportunity to study in regular schools while receiving educational services equivalent to those provided to other learners. Based on the synthesis of these perspectives, it can be concluded that inclusive education is an educational approach that upholds the principle of equality by integrating children with special needs and typically developing students into the same classroom environment. Referring to (Rahman et al., 2023), the primary principles of inclusive education are educational equity and quality improvement. These principles affirm that all learners, including children with special needs, possess equal fundamental rights to access quality educational services. Therefore, inclusive education plays a crucial role as a concrete manifestation of respecting every child's fundamental

right to obtain equal educational opportunities without discrimination.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) represents a crucial developmental stage that emphasizes providing stimulation, encouragement, and motivation for children from birth to six years of age. (Henny & Ahmad, 2025) defined ECE as an educational provision that focuses on establishing the basic foundation of children's development, including moral, physical, cognitive, social-emotional, and language development according to their developmental characteristics. Similarly, (Roswati, 2020) defined ECE as an educational provision focusing on laying the foundation for children's growth and development, encompassing moral, physical, cognitive, social-emotional, and language aspects appropriate to children's developmental stages. The author further viewed ECE as a systematic educational effort directed toward children from birth to six years of age through educational stimulation to optimize both physical and psychological development. This perspective is reinforced by (D. Rahmawati et al., 2025), who emphasized that providing appropriate stimulation during this developmental period serves both preventive and developmental functions in supporting children's holistic growth, enabling them to acquire adequate basic competencies before entering primary education. Based on the synthesis of these perspectives, it can be concluded that Early Childhood Education is an essential educational process aimed at stimulating and developing all aspects of children's potential from birth to six years of age. In relation to its role in inclusive education, Early Childhood Education teachers perform several essential functions, including:

1. As a Learning Facilitator. According to (Faizin et al., 2025), teachers serve as learning facilitators who are responsible for creating a learning ecosystem that is inclusive, adaptive, and responsive to the individual needs of all learners, including children with special needs.
2. As a Mentor and Social Mediator. In line with this perspective, (Silaban & Handayani Damanik, 2025) emphasized that teachers' roles extend beyond conventional instructional functions. Teachers also act as mentors and social mediators who support children's academic, emotional, and social development.
3. As a Developmental Assessor. Furthermore, (Rohimah et al., 2024, p. 37) added that teachers also function as developmental assessors who continuously monitor and evaluate children's developmental progress.

Based on the synthesis of these perspectives, it can be concluded that Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers are the primary determinants of successful inclusive education implementation. Their responsibilities extend beyond delivering instructional content to encompass the roles of learning facilitators, mentors, social mediators, and developmental assessors.

In the context of Early Childhood Education (ECE), the dynamics of inclusive education refer to the continuous process of change and adaptation occurring within the school ecosystem. As explained by (Yucui & Low, 2024), these dynamics involve the close interaction among inclusive school culture, institutional policies, and teachers' pedagogical practices, all of which aim to effectively address the diverse needs of learners. Several determining factors influence the implementation of inclusive education in ECE settings, including:

1. Teacher Competence. (Rahman et al., 2023) emphasized that the effectiveness of inclusive education largely depends on teachers' professional competence.
2. Institutional Support and Government Policies. According to (Rohimah et al., 2024), the successful implementation of inclusive education is strongly influenced by comprehensive regulations, adequate funding, accessible facilities, and effective coordination among relevant institutions. The absence of such systemic support frequently creates operational barriers that hinder schools from providing optimal inclusive educational services.
3. Parents' and Community Perspectives. (Maghfiroh et al., 2025, p. 21186) stated that active parental participation and effective communication between families and schools serve as important catalysts for the success of inclusive education. Conversely, negative social stigma or limited public acceptance of inclusive education may become psychosocial barriers that require special attention.
4. Availability of Resources and Educational Facilities. Consistent with the findings of (Rohimah et al., 2024), the successful implementation of inclusive education depends on the availability of adequate resources. These include assistive learning materials, adaptive classroom arrangements, differentiated instructional materials, and accessible school infrastructure that accommodates the needs of all learners.

Several scholars have proposed different perspectives regarding teachers' strategies in inclusive Early Childhood Education:

1. Child-Friendly School Approach. (Beridanissa et al., 2025) argued that teachers' strategies in child-friendly inclusive schools include creating a safe and supportive learning environment, utilizing inclusive instructional media, conducting early identification of students' learning needs, and implementing discussion-based learning to foster empathy and positive social interaction among learners.
2. Responsiveness to Diversity. (Delfianti & Hijriati, 2025) defined teachers' strategies in inclusive education as planned ways of thinking and acting that are responsive to the diverse characteristics and learning needs of children.

3. Play-Based Learning Innovation. In the same vein, (Misa et al., 2025) argued that creative strategies in inclusive education involve systematic efforts to design and implement innovative, play-based instructional approaches that support children's active participation and holistic development.

Based on the synthesis of these perspectives, it can be concluded that teachers' strategies in inclusive Early Childhood Education (ECE) consist of a series of systematic actions designed to create a learning ecosystem that is inclusive, safe, and responsive to the diverse needs of learners. Classroom behavior and environment management are essential competencies that teachers must possess to establish a conducive, secure, and enjoyable learning atmosphere for young children. (Jazriyah, 2023) emphasized that in the context of Early Childhood Education, classroom management extends beyond the physical arrangement of learning facilities to include the effective management of children's behavior throughout the instructional process.

Considering that young children are naturally dynamic, curious, and inclined to express their emotions spontaneously, teachers are expected to possess the skills required to guide children's behavior appropriately. This enables learning activities to proceed in an orderly manner while simultaneously preserving children's creativity and freedom of expression. Collaboration in Early Childhood Education represents a strategic partnership among teachers and various stakeholders to support the learning process and optimize children's development. According to (Oktaviana & Zanki, 2021), such collaboration involves cross-sector partnerships among fellow teachers, school administrators, parents, and the surrounding community. Within the ECE ecosystem, parental involvement plays a crucial role, as children's development is influenced not only by the school environment but also by parenting practices at home. Therefore, strong coherence and collaboration between teachers and parents are essential to ensure that children's developmental stimulation is implemented consistently across both educational institutions and the home environment.

2. METHOD

This study was conducted at TK Nusa Indah, Palembang City, South Sumatra. The selection of TK Nusa Indah as the research site was based on its implementation of an inclusive approach within its learning environment. As an institution serving both typically developing children and children with special needs, TK Nusa Indah provides a relevant setting for investigating teachers' strategies in managing the dynamics of inclusive education. The study was carried out during the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year.

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to comprehensively examine Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers' strategies in managing the dynamics of inclusive education. This approach was selected because it is appropriate for exploring teachers' experiences, perspectives, and authentic pedagogical practices in inclusive classrooms. In qualitative research, the researcher served as the primary research instrument, collecting and interpreting data through field observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. A case study design was adopted, with the unit of analysis focusing on ECE teachers who taught inclusive classrooms. This design enabled the researcher to directly observe classroom practices, capture teachers' lived experiences, and identify the factors influencing their instructional adaptations to meet diverse learners' needs. Consequently, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of inclusive educational practices in the ECE context.

The study utilized qualitative data consisting of verbal narratives, descriptions of participants' experiences, and detailed accounts of instructional strategies implemented by ECE teachers in inclusive classrooms. The data comprised both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were obtained from ECE teachers responsible for inclusive classes, while secondary data were collected from relevant documents and institutional records.

To obtain comprehensive and trustworthy data, several data collection techniques were employed:

In-depth Interviews. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore teachers' experiences, perspectives, and instructional strategies in managing students with diverse learning needs. According to (Ardiansyah et al., 2023), interviews are a data collection method conducted through direct dialogue with participants to obtain detailed information. Similarly, (A. Rahmawati et al., 2024) explained that interviews represent direct two-way communication between researchers and participants to gather specific information required for the study. Furthermore, interviews facilitate the exchange of information and ideas, enabling researchers to develop comprehensive conclusions regarding the investigated phenomenon (Esterberg, 2002, as cited in Irawan et al., 2024). Likewise, Wood (2013, as cited in Devi et al., 2024) emphasized that the essence of interviewing lies in dynamic question-and-answer interactions.

Observation. Prior to the main data collection, the researcher conducted direct classroom observations to identify the initial conditions of the research setting and understand students' behaviors as well as the interactions occurring within the inclusive classroom environment. According to (Phafiandita et al., 2022), observation is a systematic, objective, and logical process of examining and documenting phenomena in either natural or controlled settings to achieve research objectives. Likewise, Nana Sudjana (as cited in Hasibuan et al., 2023) defined observation as the systematic and planned activity of observing and recording research phenomena. Similarly, (Sarita & Imawati, 2022) described observation as a structured process of examining and documenting events occurring within the research context, while (Zanariyah, 2024) emphasized that

observation is a purposeful data collection method conducted systematically to address predetermined research objectives.

Table 1. Observation Instrument Blueprint

No.	Research Focus	Observed Aspect	Observation Indicators
1	Instructional Strategies	Implementation of Inclusive Learning	The teacher adapts instructional methods to students' characteristics.
			The teacher uses learning media appropriate to students' needs.
			The teacher provides individualized assistance to children with special needs according to their needs.
			The teacher provides equal learning opportunities for all students.
			The teacher modifies learning activities when necessary.
2	Behavior and Classroom Environment Management	Inclusive Classroom Management	The teacher creates a safe, comfortable, and conducive classroom environment.
			The teacher fosters mutual respect among students.
			The teacher manages students' behavior using positive approaches.
			The classroom arrangement supports the needs of all students.
			All students participate in learning activities without discrimination.
3	Collaboration in Early Childhood Education	Collaboration with Stakeholders	The teacher communicates with parents regarding children's development.
			The teacher coordinates with the principal regarding the implementation of inclusive education.
			The teacher collaborates with other parties to support students' needs.

Table 2. Teacher Interview Instrument Blueprint

No.	Research Focus	Observed Aspect	Interview Indicators
1	Instructional Strategies	Lesson Planning	The teacher plans instruction according to students' needs and characteristics.
		Instructional Implementation	The teacher applies a variety of instructional methods and learning media.
		Student Support	The teacher provides individualized assistance according to students' needs.
2	Behavior and Classroom Environment Management	Behavior Management	The teacher applies positive approaches to managing students' behavior.
		Classroom Environment	The teacher creates a safe, comfortable, and inclusive classroom environment.
		Social Interaction	The teacher promotes positive interactions among students.
3	Collaboration in Early Childhood Education	Parent Collaboration	The teacher maintains communication with parents regarding children's development.
		School Collaboration	The teacher coordinates with the principal regarding the implementation of inclusive education.
4	School Policy	Policy Understanding	The teacher understands the school's

			inclusive education policy.
		Policy Implementation	The teacher implements the school's inclusive education policy during classroom instruction.

Table 3. Principal Interview Instrument Blueprint

No.	Research Focus	Observed Aspect	Interview Indicators
1	School Policy	Inclusive Education Policy	The school has policies regarding the implementation of inclusive education.
		Policy Implementation	Inclusive education policies are implemented in school activities.
2	School Support	Support for Teachers	The school provides support for teachers in implementing inclusive learning.
		Facilities and Infrastructure	The school provides facilities that support inclusive education.
3	Collaboration in Early Childhood Education	Parent Collaboration	The school establishes communication with parents regarding children's development.
		Collaboration with External Parties	The school collaborates with relevant stakeholders to support inclusive education.
4	Inclusive Education Development	Program Evaluation	The school evaluates the implementation of inclusive education.
		Development Plans	The school has plans to improve the quality of inclusive education.

Table 4. Interview Instrument Blueprint for Parents of Children with Special Needs

No.	Research Focus	Observed Aspect	Interview Indicators
1	Instructional Strategies	Learning Implementation	Parents are aware of the instructional strategies used by teachers for their children.
		Learning Support	Parents understand the forms of support provided by teachers during learning.
		Child Development	Parents observe their children's development after participating in school learning activities.
2	Behavior and Classroom Environment Management	Learning Environment	Parents are aware of classroom conditions that support their children.
		Social Interaction	Parents understand their children's interactions with teachers and peers.
		Teacher Attitudes	Parents perceive that teachers treat children fairly and without discrimination.
3	Collaboration in Early Childhood Education	Communication with Teachers	Parents maintain communication with teachers regarding their children's development.
		Collaboration	Parents participate in supporting their children's learning both at home and at school.
4	School Policy	School Support	Parents are aware of the school's policies regarding inclusive education.
		School Services	Parents evaluate the school's support and services provided for children with special needs.

Documentation

Documentation is defined as a data collection technique that gathers information through the examination of documents and archival records. Moleong's concept of documentation has served as a fundamental reference for many researchers in collecting field data (Hanafiah et al., 2022; Musyadad et al., 2022; Tanjung et al., 2022). According to (Hasan, 2022), documentation refers to the process of providing supporting documents based on accurate evidence obtained from recorded information originating from reliable sources. In this study, documentation was employed to strengthen the credibility of the findings and complement the data obtained through interviews and observations.

To ensure the objectivity and trustworthiness of the findings, several strategies were employed to establish data credibility and confirm that the results accurately reflected the realities experienced by the participants rather than the researcher's subjective interpretations. These strategies included:

1. Triangulation. Method triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. The integration of these multiple data sources enabled the researcher to verify the consistency and credibility of the findings (R. Rahmawati & Yaswinda, 2022).
2. Member Checking. This procedure was carried out to ensure that the information recorded and interpreted by the researcher accurately reflected the participants' intended meanings and lived experiences (Mckim, 2023).
3. Prolonged Engagement. By spending an extended period in the research setting, the researcher was able to identify naturally occurring behavioral patterns while minimizing potential bias and errors in data interpretation (Zuchri Abdussamad, 2021, p. 35).

The data were analyzed qualitatively using the interactive model developed by (Miles & Huberman, 2024, as cited in Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024), which consists of three interconnected stages: (1) data reduction, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing and verification. This analytical procedure is also consistent with the framework proposed by (Azhar et al., 2023).

1. Data Reduction. Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation were selected, organized, coded, and simplified to focus on information relevant to the research objectives.
2. Data Display. The reduced data were systematically presented in the form of narrative descriptions, matrices, and thematic categories to facilitate interpretation and identify patterns related to teachers' strategies in implementing inclusive education.
3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification. Conclusions were drawn continuously throughout the research process and were verified through repeated examination of the data, triangulation, and member checking to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the findings.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study was conducted at TK Nusa Indah, located at Jalan Kenari I No. 1186, 9 Ilir, Ilir Timur III District, Palembang, South Sumatra. The primary objective of this study was to explore and describe the pedagogical strategies implemented by Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers in the context of inclusive education at TK Nusa Indah, Palembang. In accordance with the research focus, the observations were limited to two children with special needs. To maintain research ethics regarding participants' privacy and confidentiality, the researcher used initials instead of the participants' real names. The two participants consisted of one child with a speech impairment (initials RA) and one child with autism spectrum disorder (initials KS). These participants were selected because they actively participated in all inclusive classroom learning activities, enabling them to provide rich and relevant information related to the objectives of this study.

Table 5. Informant Codes

Code	Description
KS NI	Principal of TK Nusa Indah
GR 1	Teacher Informant 1
GR 2	Teacher Informant 2
OT MABK 1	Parent of Child with Special Needs 1
OT MABK 2	Parent of Child with Special Needs 2
KS	Child with Special Needs (Autism Spectrum Disorder)
RA	Child with Special Needs (Speech Impairment)

Inclusive Learning Environment

The observation results indicated that the learning environment at TK Nusa Indah was safe, supportive, and highly inclusive for all learners. The establishment of a child-friendly learning ecosystem enabled both typically developing children and children with special needs to play, learn, and interact equally according to their individual abilities. The classroom atmosphere was highly participatory, with teachers implementing a play-based learning approach that effectively reduced learning pressure while increasing children's engagement in classroom activities.

Interactions between teachers and students were positive and harmonious. Teachers consistently provided appropriate attention and individualized support for children with special needs without any discriminatory

treatment. Furthermore, the children's ability to adapt and establish positive relationships with their peers contributed to the development of an inclusive and socially supportive classroom environment. Overall, these findings demonstrate the school's successful implementation of an inclusive educational setting that effectively supports the cognitive, social, and emotional development of all learners.

1. Findings

A. The Dynamics of Inclusive Education at TK Nusa Indah

Based on the interview with the principal of TK Nusa Indah, Palembang, it was found that the implementation of inclusive education is based on providing equal learning opportunities for all children regardless of their individual conditions. The dynamics of inclusive education are reflected in the diversity of students' characteristics, learning abilities, and support needs. Teachers serve not only as instructors but also as facilitators who assist children in participating actively in classroom activities and interacting with their peers. In addition, inclusive education is characterized by the continuous social adjustment between typically developing children and children with special needs during both learning and play activities. These interactions enable children to understand individual differences, develop mutual respect, and foster empathy toward their classmates.

B. Instructional Strategies in the Implementation of Inclusive Education

Interviews with the principal and teachers revealed that the instructional strategies adopted at TK Nusa Indah are centered on meeting the diverse learning needs of all students. Teachers uphold the principle of educational equity by providing proportional learning opportunities for both typically developing children and children with special needs (CWSN). The primary strategy involves treating all learners inclusively by ensuring that every child actively participates in classroom activities and social interactions. To promote students' comfort and sense of belonging, teachers employ a variety of instructional methods that are flexibly adjusted to children's individual abilities and developmental characteristics.

Table 6. Principal's Interview Results on Instructional Strategies in Inclusive Education

Interview Question	Informant	Interview Findings
How are instructional strategies implemented in inclusive education?	Principal	We strive to provide equal attention to all children, both typically developing children and children with special needs, so they can learn together comfortably. The school also supports teachers in implementing inclusive learning and facilitates each child's development according to their individual needs without discrimination.

Source: Researcher's interview and observation (2026).

Data triangulation involving in-depth interviews, participant observations, and document analysis consistently demonstrated that TK Nusa Indah has effectively implemented inclusive education.

Table 7. Interview and Observation Results on Classroom Arrangement

Interview Question	Informant	Interview Findings
How is the classroom organized in implementing inclusive education?	Teacher 1	All children learn in the same classroom. We do not separate children with special needs from other children because they need to learn and interact together.
	Teacher 2	Children sit and play together so that they become accustomed to interacting without distinguishing among their classmates.

Source: Researcher's interview and observation (2026).

Teachers employ a variety of instructional approaches appropriate to early childhood development, including play-based learning, singing, storytelling, demonstrations, question-and-answer sessions, and interactive group activities.

Table 8. Interview and Observation Results on Teaching Methods

Interview Question	Informant	Interview Findings
What instructional methods are used in inclusive classrooms?	Teacher 1	Children learn more easily through play because they enjoy the activities and participate actively.
	Teacher 2	Playing together teaches children to cooperate and help one another without distinguishing among their peers.

Source: Researcher's interview and observation (2026).

Interviews further revealed that individualized support is one of the primary strategies used to assist children who experience learning difficulties, particularly children with special needs.

Table 9. Interview and Observation Results on Individualized Support

Interview Question	Informant	Interview Findings
How do teachers support students who experience learning difficulties?	Teacher 1	Children learn more easily through play because they enjoy participating in the activities.
	Teacher 2	Individual support is provided so that every child can participate successfully in learning activities together with their classmates.
	Parent of CWSN 1	Teachers provide excellent support for my child at school. Their assistance and attention have helped my child become more independent, confident, and comfortable participating in classroom activities.
	Parent of CWSN 2	I see that the teachers are very attentive to my child's needs. They always provide assistance whenever my child encounters difficulties and encourage them to interact with their classmates.

Source: Researcher's interview and observation (2026).

Observation and interview findings also indicated that teachers manage children's behavior using positive and persuasive approaches, including providing clear instructions, repeating directions when necessary, and offering continuous encouragement throughout classroom activities.

Table 10. Interview and Observation Results on Student Behavior Management

Interview Question	Informant	Interview Findings
How do teachers manage students' behavior in inclusive classrooms?	Teacher 1	Instructions are usually repeated slowly so that children can better understand what they are expected to do.
	Teacher 2	Some children require repeated guidance to participate successfully in classroom activities.

Source: Researcher's interview and observation (2026).

Teachers and parents agreed that the inclusive learning environment at TK Nusa Indah is built upon the values of tolerance, solidarity, and mutual respect.

Table 11. Interview and Observation Results on the Inclusive Learning Environment

Interview Question	Informant	Interview Findings
How do teachers create an inclusive learning environment?	Teacher 1	We do not differentiate between children with special needs and typically developing children. Everyone learns and plays together.
	Teacher 2	As teachers, we strive to treat every child fairly so that they feel comfortable and accepted at school.

Source: Researcher's interview and observation (2026).

Teachers consistently maintain communication with parents through face-to-face meetings, WhatsApp groups, and informal discussions during student pick-up times.

Table 12. Interview and Observation Results on Teacher–Parent Collaboration

Interview Question	Informant	Interview Findings
How do teachers collaborate with parents to support inclusive education?	Teacher 1	We always maintain communication with parents so that children's development can be monitored together.
	Teacher 2	Collaboration with parents helps teachers better understand children's needs and developmental progress.
	Parent of CWSN 1	Teachers not only provide information about my child's development at school but also give suggestions on how to support learning at home.
	Parent of CWSN 2	Teachers frequently advise us on how to communicate with and assist our child at home to further support their development.

Source: Researcher's interview and observation (2026).

The principal also plays a strategic role by providing managerial support that guarantees equal educational opportunities for all students.

Table 13. Interview and Observation Results on the Principal's Managerial Support

Interview Question	Informant	Interview Findings
How does the principal support the implementation of inclusive education?	Principal	The school supports teachers in implementing inclusive learning and ensures equal learning opportunities for all students.

Source: Researcher's interview and observation (2026).

Interviews with the principal, teachers, and parents identified several factors that support the successful implementation of inclusive education.

Table 14. Interview and Observation Results on Supporting Factors for Inclusive Education

Interview Question	Informant	Interview Findings	Interview Question
What factors support the implementation of inclusive education at TK Nusa Indah?	Principal	The school fully supports the implementation of inclusive learning.	What factors support the implementation of inclusive education at TK Nusa Indah?
	Teacher 1	Teachers' commitment and effective communication with parents are important factors in supporting learning.	

Source: Researcher's interview and observation (2026).

Teachers and parents expressed positive perceptions regarding the implementation of inclusive education.

Table 15. Interview and Observation Results on Teachers' Perceptions of Inclusive Education

Interview Question	Informant	Interview Findings
What are teachers' perceptions of inclusive education?	Teacher 1	Teachers provide equal learning opportunities for all students by adapting instructional delivery and individualized support.
	Teacher 2	Teachers do not differentiate between typically developing children and children with special needs during classroom activities.

Source: Researcher's interview and observation (2026).

Parents also expressed positive views regarding the inclusive education model implemented by the school.

Table 16. Interview and Observation Results on Parents' Perceptions of Inclusive Education

Interview Question	Informant	Interview Findings
What are parents' opinions regarding inclusive education at the school?	Teacher 1	Teachers provide equal learning opportunities for all students by adapting instructional delivery and support.

	Teacher 2	Teachers treat typically developing children and children with special needs equally during learning activities.
	Parent of CWSN 1	My child has been well accepted at school. Both teachers and classmates provide support, making my child more confident.

Source: Researcher's interview and observation (2026).

Inclusive education at TK Nusa Indah contributes not only to children's cognitive development but also to their social and emotional growth.

Table 17. Interview and Observation Results on Students' Learning Outcomes and Development

Interview Question	Informant	Interview Findings
How have students developed after participating in inclusive education?	Teacher 1	Children have become more accustomed to learning and playing together without distinguishing among their classmates. They have also begun to demonstrate helping behaviors and mutual respect.
	Teacher 2	Students interact more easily and are increasingly willing to play and cooperate with all classmates regardless of their individual conditions.
	Parent of CWSN 1	My child is now more confident and has started playing with classmates.
	Parent of CWSN 2	Compared to before, my child is now more willing to participate in classroom activities and interact with peers. There has been considerable progress since joining this school.

Source: Researcher's interview and observation (2026).

Overall, the triangulated findings demonstrate consistent evidence across all participants that the implementation of inclusive education at TK Nusa Indah has successfully established a supportive learning environment that values diversity and provides equitable opportunities for every child to develop according to their individual potential.

Table 18. Coding of Research Findings

Code	Theme	Subthemes
DP	Dynamics of Inclusive Education	Characteristics of Children with Special Needs, Student Diversity, Teachers' Challenges
SG	Teachers' Strategies	Flexible Learning, Individualized Support, Play-Based Learning, Instructional Modification, Parent Communication, Inclusive Learning Environment
HB	Challenges in Inclusive Education	Diverse Student Characteristics, Limited Instructional Time, Divided Teacher Attention, Limited Facilities and Infrastructure
UP	Teachers' Efforts	Gradual Assistance, Repeated Instructions, Motivational Support, Parent–School Collaboration
DM	Impact of Teachers' Strategies	Social Development, Self-Confidence of Children with Special Needs, Positive Peer Interaction

Discussion

The findings of this study at TK Nusa Indah 1 Palembang confirm that teachers implement gradual assistance (scaffolding) as a key strategy to support children with special needs (CWSN) in inclusive classrooms. This approach is carried out through repeated instructions, task assistance, and individualized support tailored to each child's unique needs and abilities. Empirically, gradual assistance has been shown to significantly enhance the effectiveness of the learning process for children with special needs. The systematic support provided enables children to better understand instructions and actively participate in classroom activities. This approach allows learners to gradually adapt to the learning environment without feeling overwhelmed by the demands of a uniform curriculum. These findings are consistent with the argument of (Faizin et al., 2025), who emphasized that Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers should adapt

instructional strategies and social interactions to optimize the development of all children.

Beyond cognitive development, gradual assistance also has positive implications for children's social and emotional development. Through consistent support, children become more self-confident, more willing to participate in group activities, and feel increasingly accepted by their peers. It can therefore be concluded that the implementation of gradual assistance at TK Nusa Indah 1 Palembang is an effective strategy for managing the dynamics of inclusive classrooms. This approach provides children with special needs with equitable opportunities to develop their abilities and achieve their full potential according to their individual capabilities.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the implementation of inclusive education at TK Nusa Indah, Palembang, has been carried out effectively through a variety of teacher strategies tailored to the diverse characteristics and needs of young learners. The teachers consistently provided equal learning opportunities for both typically developing children and children with special needs, enabling them to learn, participate, and develop together in an inclusive classroom environment. The findings also demonstrate that the success of inclusive education depends not only on the instructional strategies employed by teachers but also on their ability to manage inclusive classrooms and establish strong collaboration with parents and school administrators. These interconnected elements create a supportive learning environment that promotes equal access to education, social participation, and holistic development for all children. Overall, the study highlights that flexible teaching strategies, positive classroom management, individualized support, and effective school–family partnerships are essential components for the successful implementation of inclusive early childhood education.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed. Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers are encouraged to continuously enhance their professional competencies by participating in training and professional development programs related to inclusive education, enabling them to adopt effective and responsive instructional practices for children with diverse learning needs. Schools should strengthen their commitment to inclusive education by providing adequate infrastructure, adaptive learning facilities, diverse instructional media, and an accessible learning environment that supports all children without discrimination. Parents are expected to maintain active communication and collaboration with teachers to ensure consistency between learning experiences at school and support provided at home, thereby promoting children's overall development. Furthermore, future researchers are encouraged to expand investigations into inclusive education by exploring more specific aspects, such as differentiated instructional strategies, teacher competencies, parental involvement, or the long-term social and academic development of children with special needs across various educational settings.

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