



Analysis of the Implementation of the Inclusive Early Childhood Education Curriculum Model : Case Study at Bright Kiddie Kindergarten Ponorogo, Indonesia

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Abstract: This research aims to analyze the implementation of the inclusive Early Childhood Education curriculum model at Bright Kiddie Kindergarten Ponorogo, Indonesia. This research used a qualitative approach with a case study method. The informants for this research were the school principal, class teacher and teacher accompanying children with special needs. Data collection techniques used were interviews, observation, and documentation. Next, data analysis used interactive model analysis, and for the validity of the research data, the triangulation method was used. The research results showed that Bright Kiddie Kindergarten had children with special needs with different characteristics, needs and abilities. In implementing inclusive learning, the school used regular and pull-out class models with duplication, simplification, substitution and omission curriculum models according to the needs of each student with special needs. Children with special needs study with other children in regular classes. However, at certain times, they will be moved to another room to receive additional learning from special accompanying teachers. The curriculum model was also adjusted based on the identification and assessment results of each child with special needs as a basis for appropriate learning planning. Some duplicate the same curriculum as normal children (duplication), some simplify it without eliminating the substance (simplification), some replace it with equivalent material (substitution), and there are those who change it completely to suit the needs of each child.

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Introduction

Inclusive education is education that combines all children, including children with disabilities, to receive equal and appropriate education in formal schools (Hayes & Bulat, 2017). Inclusive education refers to an education model where students with special needs study in a general school environment together with their friends who have various different educational needs (Amiruddin, 2022). As stated in Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 70 concerning Inclusive Education, 2009, article 1 that inclusive education is an education system that accepts all students, including those who have special needs and extraordinary intelligence or talent, to learn together in one educational environment with other students. This aims to create equal education, respecting differences and without discrimination for all children. Therefore, in order to uphold human rights in obtaining education, educational institutions must not refuse to accept children with special needs, "No Child Left Behind" (Jewell, 2014).



The curriculum in inclusive education must be adapted to the needs of each student, both normal students and students with special needs to avoid disparities in the learning process and provide benefits to the teaching and learning process from both the teacher's perspective and students with special needs (Mirasandi, 2019). In this case, teachers have the responsibility to create an inclusive classroom atmosphere for all children, by emphasizing the importance of a classroom social environment that respects economic, ethnic and religious aspects which require fundamental changes to the curriculum (Kaplan & Bista, 2022).

The implementation of the Early Childhood Education inclusion curriculum was also a topic in research conducted by Wardhani et al. (2023), who found that Kampung Bahari used the Merdeka curriculum for children aged 5-6 years and the 2013 curriculum for children aged 3-4 years, where the curriculum modifications were grouped into There are 3 types, namely time allocation, material and teaching and learning process. A similar thing was also explained in research conducted by Kurniawati (2023) in which curriculum modifications were also implemented at the Rawamangun Labschool Kindergarten. This school also implements the Merdeka curriculum with the option of effective independent learning by adjusting students' abilities, both in material and assessment.

One of the Early Childhood Education institutions in Ponorogo that has a policy of accepting children with special needs is Bright Kiddie Kindergarten. Bright Kiddie Kindergarten is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual school that carries the motto "Humans are born the same, education makes them different" and has started implementing inclusive education since its inception, namely in 2007. With the presence of children with special needs who have different types of characteristics, this school uses the curriculum model classification from the Bell School Foundation. It combines it with the Merdeka curriculum and is modified with an inclusive Early Childhood Education curriculum, namely duplication, simplification, substitution and omission in a regular pull-out class model according to the needs of the children. Students with special needs. Bright Kiddie Kindergarten uses an integrated curriculum model like this because of the integration that must be met by both the foundation and government curriculum targets, as well as the importance of modifying the curriculum for students with special needs. This research aims to analyze the implementation of the inclusive Early Childhood Education curriculum model implemented at Bright Kiddie Kindergarten.

From these two preliminary studies, it is known that the first and second preliminary studies did not specifically discuss the class model used for children with special needs. In contrast, the regular pull-out class model, as implemented by Bright Kiddie Kindergarten, should be an important thing to do, considering that the characteristics, abilities and needs of normal children and children with special needs cannot be generalized. So, at certain times, learning outside the classroom must be scheduled to focus more on improving the abilities and needs of each child. Apart from that, in the preliminary research, only one and two curricula were used for children with special needs, so Bright Kiddie Kindergarten uses three curricula at once, namely the Bell School Foundation curriculum, the Merdeka curriculum and also the inclusive Early Childhood Education curriculum with a duplication, simplification, substitution and omission approach, which can provide a perspective that several curricula can be integrated comprehensively to meet the needs of children with special needs. Therefore, the regular pull-out class model, which is implemented with a combination of the Inclusive Early Childhood Education curriculum model with the



duplication, implication, substitution and omission approaches, is one of the innovations that can be used in Inclusive Early Childhood Education Institutions.

Research Method

This research used a qualitative approach with a case study method carried out at Bright Kiddie Kindergarten Ponorogo Indonesia. In this qualitative research, those who act as subjects are informants (Pahleviannur et al., 2022). Informants in this research were taken using a purposive sampling technique, namely taking teachers who have special experience with inclusive education (Novianti, Mahardhani, et al., 2023), where in Bright Kiddie Kindergarten the informants chosen were the principal, class teachers and teachers accompanying children with special needs. Meanwhile, the data collection technique used triangulation of data sources, which involves collecting information from various sources, namely through interviews, observation and documentation (Alfansyur & Articles, 2020).

Interviews were conducted with open questions to the principal, two class teachers and two accompanying teachers, observations and documentation were carried out directly by observing and documenting the implementation of the inclusive curriculum model at Bright Kiddie Kindergarten. The data analysis technique used in this research is the interactive analysis model of Miles and Huberman which includes data collection (through interviews, observation and documentation), data reduction (making a summary of the interview results), data presentation (presenting in table form) and drawing conclusions (Huberman & Miles, 2012).

Results and Discussion

Inclusive Early Childhood Education Curriculum Model

The readiness of an inclusion-based kindergarten school refers to the institution's ability to provide an inclusive environment for all children, including children with special needs (Nadifa et al., 2024). Opperti and Brady in the research journal Chatryn Knight and Tom Crick (Knight & Crick, 2022) added that adapting the curriculum is very important for understanding inclusive education. This can be done by applying the concepts of diversity, the right to lifelong learning, and comprehensive citizenship education for all students with the aim of guaranteeing every individual's right to education. *".....combine the density and strength of key concepts (i.e. the value of diversity, the right to lifelong learning, comprehensive citizenship education) through options, flexibility, and consideration of all learners within schools and classrooms, to guarantee their individual right to education. (p.462)"*

In the guidelines for implementing inclusive education, it is stated that the curriculum applied generally uses the standard curriculum implemented in public schools, then adapts it to the needs and abilities of students with special needs (Nurjannah & Hermanto, 2023). Guidelines that need to be implemented in developing an inclusive Early Childhood Education curriculum according to (Nurwanto, 2018) (1). The curriculum must be adapted to the needs of children with special needs (2). Every child with special needs requires different adjustments (3). Adjustment does not have to cover all aspects of development (4). Modifications can be made to aspects of objectives, materials, processes and evaluation. The consequence of implementing inclusive education is that schools must make various changes and adjustments, starting from perspectives and attitudes, to educational processes that are centered on individual needs without discrimination in the school system (Larosa et al.,



2022). Utami stated that curriculum modifications or adjustments can be made through (Utami, 2017):

- 1) For gifted students with intelligence above normal (developing a high-level curriculum, adding new material, accelerating the teaching of material).
- 2) For students with relatively normal intelligence (the curriculum is maintained or the level of difficulty is slightly reduced).
- 3) For students with intelligence below normal (curriculum reduced/difficulty level adjusted/irrelevant parts removed).

According to several studies that have been conducted previously (Asrori et al., 2023; Insiatun et al., 2021; Nadifa et al., 2024), the inclusive early childhood education curriculum model was designed based on the inclusive education curriculum model, namely: (1) escalation, acceleration and expansion programs in terms of time and material assignments, (2) duplication of curriculum for children with special needs, it is adjusted to the general curriculum standards, (3) simulation, the general curriculum standards are changed without eliminating the substance to suit the child's needs and abilities, (4) substitution, where several parts of the curriculum are eliminated and replaced with equivalent material, and (5) Omission, several parts of the general curriculum were completely removed because they could not be followed by children with special needs (Mahardhani, 2023).

Implementation of the Inclusive Early Childhood Education Curriculum Model

As a school that has various characteristics of children with special needs, Bright Kiddie Kindergarten makes special preparations, especially in terms of the learning curriculum model given to its students (Efendi, 2022). It aims to facilitate appropriate and equal education without differentiating between normal children in general and children with special needs. At this school, the class models used are regular and pull-out classes. As explained by Sulthon in a research journal (Kurniawan & Qomariyah, 2023), sometimes, children with special needs are mixed and become one class with other normal children. However, at certain times, they are scheduled to learn outside the special class with an accompanying teacher.

At Bright Kiddie Kindergarten, the out-of-class learning schedule for children with special needs is carried out twice a week, namely during Mandarin lessons. It is intended to focus children with needs on the main needs that they must achieve first. Apart from that, focusing on the mother tongue is more important and useful as a foundation for these children when they first learn the language (Ita, 2023). Bright Kiddie Kindergarten uses a combination of the Bell School Foundation curriculum and the Merdeka curriculum in daily learning activities. Apart from that, it also makes curriculum modifications for students with needs that are tailored to the needs and abilities of each individual child (Nuraeni & Gunawan, 2021).

There are four inclusive curriculum models used at Bright Kiddie Kindergarten for children with special needs, namely duplication, simplification, substitution, and omission, of which each curriculum model is implemented and used according to the abilities, needs and characteristics of each child with obstacles (Syafi'i & Rosyidah, 2022) and these adjustments can be made to four components, objectives, content, process and evaluation. The process of adapting students with needs to the curriculum model is based on the results of the initial identification and assessment of each student with these needs. So, it does not rule out the possibility of different curriculum models for special students depending on their abilities, types of obstacles and needs (Khoirunan, 2023). After the process of identifying and assessing students with needs has been successfully carried out, the profile of each child can

be known as a basis for determining the appropriate inclusive curriculum model and planning further learning. Then, from the implementation of the learning process, assessments and evaluations can be carried out, which will be outlined in the learning outcomes report (Arriani, 2021). In tables 1 and 2 below are trends in curriculum models for students with special needs.

Table 1. Curriculum Model for ABK without intelligence barriers (Rusmiyati, 2017)

Model Components	Objective			Material	Process		Evaluation		
	KI	KD	INDI		METHOD	MEDIA	QUEST	METHOD	TOOL
Duplication	√	√	√	√	√		√		
Simplification					√	√		√	√
Substitution				√					
Omission									

Table 2. Curriculum Model for ABK with intelligence barriers (Rusmiyati, 2017)

Model Components	Objective			Material	Process		Evaluation		
	KI	KD	INDI		METHOD	MEDIA	QUEST	METHOD	TOOL
Duplication									
Simplification	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Substitution				√					
Omission				√					

Duplicate Curriculum Model

This curriculum model is used at Bright Kiddie Kindergarten for children with special needs who have obstacles that are not too severe or at a mild level so that the curriculum for ABK is equated (slightly modified) with the general curriculum (Rusmiyati, 2017). For children with special needs without intelligence barriers, only need small adjustments in learning related to the methods and media used to convey information as in Table 1 (Khoirunan, 2023)



Figure 1. Train children to communicate

The child in figure 1 experiences obstacles in communicating. The child does not experience obstacles in his intelligence. In regular class learning, the child follows the same activities and themes as other normal children. If normal children identify and name things independently, then children with needs are given assistance in the form of choices or stimulated questions. As explained by Ms. Renis as teacher of the following classes:

“Anak R ini mengalami hambatan dalam berkomunikasi Miss, dia bisa memahami dan mengerti apa yang diucapkan orang lain tetapi belum mampu mengungkapkan jawabannya dalam bentuk kata/kalimat. Pada pembelajaran tema makanan sehat, anak lain secara mandiri dapat menyebutkan dan bercerita apa saja contoh makanan sehat, baik yang ada di

hadapan mereka ataupun yang biasa mereka konsumsi. Nah, anak R ini harus diberikan stimulasi berupa instruksi atau pertanyaan terlebih dahulu “Manakah wortel?” “Coba ambil wortel!” “Ambil wortel dan berikan ke Ms. Renis, kemudian pelan-pelan belajar mengikuti kata wortel seperti itu. Bahkan Alhamdulillahnya sekarang R lebih antusias dalam pembelajaran. Suatu waktu Ketika dia melihat gambar wortel di televisi, dia memegang tangan saya dan mengucapkan wortel sambil menunjuk ke arah televisi.”

Simplication Curriculum Model

As the name suggests, this simulation curriculum model means simplifying or changing the curriculum in terms of objectives, content, methods, and methods of assessment without eliminating its substance (Rusmiyati, 2017). Bright Kiddie Kindergarten uses this curriculum model for all students with special needs, both with and without intelligence barriers, by providing simpler learning concepts. As in Table 1, children without obstacles can modify their curriculum in terms of objectives, materials and questions. Meanwhile, according to Table 2, children with intellectual disabilities can simplify the curriculum in all aspects.



Figure 2. Sports activities

The child in figure 2 experiences obstacles in communicating and also in motor development without experiencing intelligence obstacles. In sports activities, the methods applied to these children are simplified. If other normal children jump over the rope by lifting their legs alternately while jumping, then children with obstacles jump over the rope by walking, but the goal remains the same, namely learning to get over the obstacle, namely the rope; what is simplified is how to get over the obstacle. Ms. Ulin, as a shadow teacher for children with obstacles, explains that:

“Hari ini anak C good lho Miss. Tanggung jawab dan ketertarikan akan kegiatan dikelas sudah muncul. Kalau anak lain saat olahraga lompat tali bisa mandiri untuk berlari dan mengangkat kakinya secara bergantian melewati tali sambil lompat, anak C ini berjalan Miss karena dia masih perlu latihan untuk kekuatan otot kakinya. Tetapi disini dia sudah memahami konsep melewati rintangan meskipun cara yang dilakukan lebih sederhana yaitu dengan berjalan. Dan sekarang anak C ini setiap kami merentangkan tali dia langsung berjalan melewatinya tanpa menabrak tali tersebut seperti awal masuk sekolah.”

Substitution Curriculum Model

The substitution curriculum model is used at Bright Kiddie Kindergarten by eliminating several parts of the curriculum and replacing them with equivalent ones according to the abilities of students with obstacles (Rusmiyati, 2017). The substitution curriculum model can be used for children with or without intelligence barriers where adjustments can be made to aspects of objectives, processes and evaluation according to the child's abilities as listed in tables 1 and 2.



Figure 3. Intellectual Dissability

The child in picture 3 has an intellectual disability, namely Down syndrome, where his motor skills are still lacking. In regular classes, when other friends thicken the dotted lines using crayons, children with these obstacles are given a replacement curriculum, namely squeezing a sponge to increase the strength of their hands and fingers before holding the crayons. This is supported by Ms. Eci as a shadow teacher as follows:

“Anak J ini terdiagnosa down syndrome Miss, kemampuan motoriknya masih sangat kurang. Puji Tuhan orang tuanya sangat mendukung dan melakukan terapi rutin di luar sekolah. Jadi kami di sekolah sangat terbantu juga. Pada awal masuk sekolah anak J sama sekali tidak mempunyai antusias terhadap pembelajaran, bahkan melihat dan memegang spons pun langsung menangis. Tetapi perlahan-lahan anak J mulai mau untuk belajar memeras spons di dalam air. Jadi Ketika anak lain belajar menebali garis atau mewarna, maka anak J melakukan kegiatan rutin memeras spons sebelum anak J belajar memegang krayon. Sekarang anak J sudah banyak sekali perkembangannya Miss. Perkembangan motoriknya yang lebih kelihatan, sudah mampu membuat goresan dengan krayon, memegang benda besar atau kecil tanpa jatuh dan mendorong benda sebagai role play naik motor.”

Omission Curriculum Model

The use of the omission curriculum model plays an important role in Bright Kiddie Kindergarten because it really helps children with special needs to focus more on achieving learning according to their abilities. By removing completely or some parts of the curriculum (Rusmiyati, 2017), this curriculum model looks like a new curriculum specifically for students with special needs. The difference with a substitute curriculum is that in substitution there is a replacement curriculum if there is no omission. This curriculum model is only given to students with intellectual disabilities where modifications can be made to aspects of objectives, processes and evaluation depending on the abilities and needs of the students concerned as in Table 2.



Figure 4 Experiences Intelligence



The child in Figure 4 experiences intelligence barriers both in terms of cognitive, language and motor skills. The curriculum model used is an omission curriculum because capabilities are still lacking in many areas. So, it requires a new curriculum that is adapted to the abilities and needs of the child concerned. So, the learning provided is more focused on daily activities and also independence. In accordance with Ms. Rima as the following class teacher:

"Anak M ini membutuhkan banyak Latihan dan stimulasi Miss, karena dari segi kognitif, Bahasa dan juga motorik sangat kurang. Pada awal masuk sekolah anak M ini belum bisa memegang dan mengambil tasnya sendiri, kekuatan ototnya lemah sekali. Ketika kelas reguler ada pembelajaran Bahasa asing, maka anak M kami bawa untuk melakukan pembelajaran di luar kelas (pull-out). Dari stimulasi dan Latihan-latihan yang kami berikan di sekolah, akhirnya sekarang anak M bisa membawa tas sendiri, mulai bisa memakai Sepatu sendiri dan berani berjalan di atas titian dengan minim pegangan."

From the explanation above, it can be underlined that the implementation of the four inclusive curriculum models combined with the Merdeka curriculum and also the Bell School Foundation curriculum at Bright Kiddie Kindergarten plays an important role in the development of children with special needs at the school, according to the stages of their abilities. This development can be seen in terms of independence, language, cognitive skills, and motor skills. Regarding the conceptual implications related to research on the implementation of the Early Childhood Education curriculum model in Bright Kiddie Kindergarten, the indicators can be explained as follows:

1) Increased understanding of inclusive curriculum

With this research, schools can show that the implementation of an inclusive curriculum model combined with the Merdeka curriculum and the Bell School Foundation curriculum supports the development of children with special needs. It proves that inclusive education is not just about including children with special needs into regular classes but also requires adapting teaching methods according to the needs of each child (Yuwono, 2017). So that children with special needs can learn more effectively according to their abilities and needs (Ayu Sebrina et al, 2018).

2) Curriculum integration

This research proves that no single approach is effective for all students. A combination of approaches and strategies tailored to children's needs can create a more inclusive learning environment. So, it is hoped that each child can learn according to their own learning style and speed which allows them to achieve their best potential (Mustaqim, 2024).

3) The importance of developing holistic aspects

Bright Kiddie Kindergarten highlights the importance of paying attention to children's holistic development which includes independence, language, cognitive and motor skills, which shows that all aspects of development must be considered in a balanced way. So that these children are expected to develop in a balanced way in all aspects of development (Rizal, 2024). For example, implementing learning according to stages. Children will learn to practice finger motor skills first before practicing holding a pencil.

4) Acceptance and engagement

In accordance with Bright Kiddie Kindergarten's motto that "There is Education Without Difference", the acceptance and involvement of children with special needs in this school reinforces that effective inclusion involves the acceptance and active involvement of children with special needs in aspects of learning regardless of ethnic,



cultural or religious background., economic, physical or social. So, it is hoped that all children will be more confident because they can feel the same love and acceptance from all parties without discrimination (Arriani, 2021).

5) Awards

Bright Kiddie Kindergarten realizes the importance of channelling the development of children's talents, both normal children and children with special needs. It is proven by the existence of extracurricular activities for voice arts and dance as a reward for children who have talent and interest in voice arts and dance. Through the support of extracurricular activities, children can develop their potential and shape their character, so it is hoped that these children can develop their individual talents according to their abilities (Bararah, 2023).

6) Collaboration and support

Inclusive education in this school will not be able to run well without support from parents and other professional staff. For children with special needs, the role of parents is very vital, namely as the main companion, the most complete data source, advocate, teacher as well as determining the child's characteristics and needs which will determine whether there will be therapy outside of school (Siahaan, 2022). This is proven by the collaboration between teachers and parents in supporting increased child development by providing recommendations for additional therapy outside of school, and also collaboration with therapy institutions in Ponorogo. It is hoped that these children receive ongoing support and therapy that is appropriate to the child's needs.

7) Facilities and accessibility

Adequate facilities and accessibility are the keys to supporting inclusive education at Bright Kiddie Kindergarten, because education for children with special needs will run smoothly if supported by adequate facilities according to their characteristics and types of obstacles. A child-friendly school environment with learning media specifically for children with special needs such as Montessori toys has been provided to support learning (Novianti, Nurhaliza, et al., 2023). Even though it is not yet equipped with special seating for children with needs and also more diverse learning media, Bright Kiddie Kindergarten has plans to progress to add all supporting facilities for children with special needs.

Meanwhile, the practical implication indicators are as follows:

1) Adjustment of curriculum/learning methods

The presence of students with needs at Bright Kiddie Kindergarten has caused the school to modify and adjust the curriculum, where the curriculum adjustments cannot be made the same between one child and another because it is based on each child's abilities and needs. So, the need for educational services is different (Khoirunan, 2023). It is hoped that this curriculum adjustment can provide equal education for both normal children and children with needs.

2) Teacher training

Educating children with special needs requires basic education skills regarding inclusion because the teacher's readiness as a key player determines the quality of the implementation of inclusive education, where teacher readiness can be formed because of the teacher's knowledge regarding inclusion policies, student characteristics, and inclusion teaching techniques (Wardany, 2022). Therefore, educators must be equipped with knowledge about inclusion, which can be obtained



through up-to-date ongoing training/workshops. It aims to increase teacher competence in implementing effective learning and developing flexible and adaptive curriculum adjustment skills related to the needs of students with diverse needs.

Conclusion

The conclusion from the findings of this research is that Bright Kiddie Kindergarten has children with special needs with different characteristics, needs and abilities. In implementing inclusive learning, the school uses regular and pull-out class models with duplication, simplification, substitution and omission curriculum models according to the needs of each student with special needs. Children with special needs learn with other children in regular classes. However, at certain times, they will be moved to another room to receive additional learning from special accompanying teachers. The curriculum model is also adjusted based on the identification and assessment results of each child with special needs as a basis for appropriate learning planning. Some duplicate the same curriculum as normal children (duplication), some simplify it without eliminating the substance (simplification), there are those who replace it with equivalent material (substitution), and there are those who change it completely to suit the needs of each child.

Recommendation

The recommendations for Bright Kiddie Kindergarten to improve the quality of inclusive education are the development of sustainable teacher training, collaboration with professionals, improving supporting facilities, regular evaluations, strengthening communication with parents and developing social-emotional support programs for students with special needs.

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