



Inclusive Education in Early Childhood Education from Mel Ainscow's Perspective

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Abstract: This study discusses inclusive education in Early Childhood Education from the perspective of Mel Ainscow. Inclusive education is an educational approach that provides equal learning opportunities for all children without discrimination, including those with diverse learning needs. The purpose of this study is to describe the concept of inclusive education according to Mel Ainscow and to analyze its implementation in the development of early childhood education. This research employs a qualitative approach using library research methods. The data were collected from various written sources, including books, scientific journals, research articles, and documents related to inclusive education and early childhood education. Documentation techniques were used for data collection, while the data were analyzed through content analysis. The findings reveal that according to Mel Ainscow, inclusive education is a continuous process aimed at increasing the participation of all learners and reducing barriers to learning within educational environments. In the context of early childhood education, inclusive education can be implemented through flexible learning methods, child-friendly learning environments, and active collaboration between teachers and parents in supporting children's development. The implementation of inclusive education also contributes positively to children's social and emotional development, as they learn to respect diversity from an early age. However, several challenges remain, including limited facilities, insufficient teacher competence, and a lack of public understanding regarding inclusive education. Therefore, collaboration among schools, families, and the government is necessary to create an inclusive, equitable, and diversity-respecting early childhood education system.

Keywords: Diversity; Early Childhood Education; Inclusive Education; Learning Participation; Mel Ainscow.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right of every child, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or cultural background. In the context of modern education, every child is seen as having an equal opportunity to grow and develop through a learning process that is appropriate, safe, and respectful of diversity. This understanding gave rise to the concept of inclusive education, an educational approach that provides space for all children to learn together in an equal environment without discrimination. Inclusive education is not only about accepting students with special needs in mainstream schools, but also about how educational institutions can create a fair, participatory learning environment that respects differences as a natural part of human life (Fakhiratunnisa et al., 2022).

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is a crucial stage in the implementation of inclusive education. During this early age, children experience rapid development in cognitive, language, social, emotional, moral, and motor skills. This period is often referred to as the golden age because the various stimulation provided will influence the child's development in subsequent stages (Novianti Yusuf et al., 2023). Therefore, the educational environment at the PAUD level should be able to accommodate all children's needs without exception. Children

need positive learning experiences from an early age to develop self-confidence, social skills, and an appreciation for diversity in their environment.

The reality on the ground shows that the implementation of inclusive education in early childhood education (PAUD) still faces various challenges. Many PAUD institutions are not fully prepared to accommodate children with diverse learning needs. Some educators still view differences in children's abilities as obstacles to the learning process. On the other hand, limited facilities, minimal teacher training, and parents' lack of understanding of inclusive education often hinder the implementation of child-friendly learning for all. In some cases, children with developmental disabilities experience indirect exclusion because the learning system is not designed to meet their needs.

These issues demonstrate that inclusive education is not simply a matter of opening access to education, but also involves changing perspectives on student diversity. Schools cannot simply accept children with diverse conditions; they need to build a learning culture that allows all students to feel valued and engaged in learning activities (Redhana, 2024). An inclusive educational environment positions differences as strengths, not weaknesses. This way, every child has the opportunity to develop according to their potential.

In the study of inclusive education, Mel Ainscow's ideas have become a key reference widely used in the development of inclusive education systems in various countries. Mel Ainscow views inclusive education as a continuous process to reduce learning barriers and increase the participation of all students (Ainscow & Viola, 2024; Haug, 2020). Her primary focus is not solely on children with special needs, but on how schools are able to respond to the diversity of students as a whole. This perspective provides an understanding that learning failure often stems not from the child's condition alone, but from an education system that is unable to adapt to the diverse needs of students.

This perspective is particularly relevant for early childhood education institutions, as early childhood has diverse developmental characteristics. In a single class, teachers may encounter children who are active, quiet, quick to grasp material, require special assistance, or experience communication or social interaction difficulties. This diversity requires educators to create flexible and responsive learning strategies. A uniform approach often makes it difficult for some children to optimally participate in the learning process. Therefore, the principle of inclusivity must be the foundation of early childhood education.

Furthermore, inclusive education in early childhood education (PAUD) has a significant social impact on child development. When children are accustomed to learning alongside peers from diverse backgrounds and abilities, they learn empathy, tolerance,

cooperation, and respect for others from an early age. These values are crucial in shaping children's character in a diverse society. Children do not grow up with an exclusive attitude or despise differences, but instead develop an awareness that each individual has unique qualities that deserve respect.

In Indonesia, attention to inclusive education continues to grow. Various regulations have established children's rights to education without discrimination. However, its implementation at the PAUD level still requires strengthening in various aspects. Many early childhood education institutions (PAUD) have administratively declared themselves inclusive schools, but their learning practices do not fully reflect the principles of inclusion. Teachers still experience difficulties in developing adaptive learning, conducting comprehensive child development assessments, and creating healthy social interactions in the classroom.

This situation highlights the importance of a more in-depth study of inclusive education, particularly from the perspective of a prominent figure who has made significant contributions to the field. Mel Ainscow's thinking can serve as a theoretical foundation and critical reflection in understanding how inclusive education should be implemented in PAUD. The concept developed by Ainscow emphasizes the importance of collaboration, active participation, and identifying learning barriers as part of efforts to build an equitable education system for all children (Ainscow, 2020a).

This research was conducted through a literature review, reviewing various scientific sources related to inclusive education and Mel Ainscow's perspective. This approach was chosen to gain a comprehensive understanding of the concept, principles, and implementation of inclusive education in PAUD. This study is expected to provide a more in-depth understanding of the importance of building an early childhood education environment that embraces and develops the full potential of children regardless of their circumstances.

Discussions about inclusive education in early childhood education (PAUD) are not only important academically but also have practical value for educational institutions, teachers, parents, and the community. A sound understanding of inclusive education can help create a more humane and child-centered learning system. Thus, education is no longer a space that limits some children because of their differences, but rather a place for all students to grow together equally and with dignity.

2. THEORETICAL STUDY

Inclusive education is an educational approach that places all students as equal participants in the learning process. This concept developed from the awareness that every child has an equal right to education without discrimination of any kind. Education is no longer understood as a system that only serves children with specific abilities, but rather as a shared space capable of accommodating the diversity of needs, characters, social backgrounds, cultures, and developmental conditions of children (Nadhiroh & Ahmadi, 2024). In inclusive education, differences are not seen as problems to be isolated, but rather as realities that must be accepted and managed wisely within the educational environment (Gustaman et al., 2025).

Understanding inclusive education cannot be separated from the principles of justice and respect for human rights. Every child has an equal opportunity to develop according to their potential. Therefore, schools are required to adapt their learning systems so that all students can actively participate in learning activities. The focus of inclusive education is not simply placing children with special needs in mainstream schools, but rather ensuring that all children truly receive meaningful learning experiences and do not experience exclusion, either physically or socially.

In the context of Early Childhood Education (PAUD), inclusive education plays a crucial role because early childhood is the initial phase of character formation and child development. At this stage, children begin to learn about their social environment, build communication, and develop self-confidence. An educational environment that embraces diversity will help children grow with an open attitude towards differences. Conversely, if children are accustomed from an early age to an educational system that limits interactions based on specific abilities, exclusive attitudes can develop during their development.

Inclusive Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is not only academically oriented but also emphasizes children's social and emotional development. Teachers play a crucial role in creating a safe, comfortable, and respectful learning environment for each student (Fauzi et al., 2025). Children are given the opportunity to learn together, play together, and interact without discrimination. Learning in inclusive PAUD is generally flexible because each child has a different learning style and developmental level. In certain situations, teachers need to adjust methods, media, and learning activities so that all children can participate in activities according to their individual abilities (Nur Fauziah et al., 2025).

Inclusive education in early childhood education (PAUD) is also closely related to the concept of diversity. Each child brings unique characteristics influenced by their family environment, culture, social experiences, and individual developmental circumstances. This

diversity can be seen in how children communicate, respond to instructions, interact with peers, and even in their ability to understand learning. An inclusive approach views this diversity as a natural part of human life, so schools need to build a culture that values differences, rather than standardizing student abilities.

In practice, implementing inclusive PAUD requires support from various parties. Teachers cannot work alone to address the diverse learning needs of children. The involvement of parents, support staff, the school environment, and the community is a crucial factor in creating inclusive education. This collaboration is necessary to ensure a comprehensive understanding of children's developmental needs. Parents, for example, possess important information about their children's characteristics and habits at home, which can help teachers determine appropriate learning approaches.

One figure who has had a significant influence on the development of inclusive education is Mel Ainscow. Mel Ainscow's ideas are widely used as a foundation for building an education system that reaches all students without exception. Ainscow views inclusive education as a process of increasing the participation of all children while reducing barriers that may hinder their involvement in learning (Ainscow, 2024). In other words, the primary focus of inclusive education is not only on the individual circumstances of students, but also on how the educational environment can be transformed to become more open and adaptive.

According to Mel Ainscow, learning barriers often arise because the education system is unable to adequately respond to students' needs (Ainscow, 2020b). These barriers can include overly rigid learning methods, an unfriendly school environment, discriminatory attitudes, or minimal support for children who require special assistance. Therefore, inclusive education requires a change in school culture so that all children feel accepted and valued. Schools are not only places for transferring knowledge, but also social spaces that foster a sense of belonging for each student.

Ainscow's thinking also emphasizes the importance of active participation by all children in learning activities. Children are not merely physically present in the classroom; they need to be involved in the learning process, social interactions, and various other school activities. Participation is a crucial indicator of inclusive education because it demonstrates that every child has an equal opportunity to develop. In the context of early childhood education, participation can be seen through children's involvement in play, discussions, collaboration, and the expression of their opinions and feelings.

Beyond participation, the concept of inclusion, according to Mel Ainscow, relates to the elimination of various forms of exclusion in education. Exclusion does not always take the form of direct rejection, but can also arise through treatment that makes a child feel left out. For example, learning that focuses solely on children with certain abilities can make other students feel undervalued. Therefore, teachers need to be sensitive in understanding children's needs and be able to create learning strategies that provide equal opportunities for all students.

An inclusive learning environment also requires a school culture that supports the value of togetherness. Children need to be accustomed to helping one another, respecting differences, and building healthy social relationships (Muhamad Restu Fauzi & Chirzin, 2023). These values are crucial in early childhood education because early childhood social development occurs through daily interactions. When children grow up in an environment that embraces diversity, they are more likely to develop empathy and tolerance towards others.

In inclusive education, teachers play a central role as learning facilitators (Wulandari, 2024). They are not only tasked with delivering material but also with understanding the characteristics of each child and adapting their learning approach to their needs. This requires strong pedagogical, emotional, and social competencies. Teachers need to be able to build positive communication with children and parents to ensure optimal learning. An open and reflective attitude is also crucial for teachers in navigating diverse classroom dynamics.

Mel Ainscow's study of inclusive education provides an understanding that inclusion is not a one-time program, but rather a continuous process in building a more equitable education system. Inclusive education requires a shift in perspectives on children, learning, and the school environment. In the context of early childhood education (PAUD), this approach is highly relevant because early childhood education is a crucial foundation for shaping a child's holistic development. By implementing inclusive principles, PAUD is expected to become a learning space that accepts all children as individuals with equal rights, potential, and opportunities to develop.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with library research. This method was chosen based on the research objective, which focuses on examining the concept of inclusive education in early childhood education (PAUD) from Mel Ainscow's perspective. Library research allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding through various written sources relevant to the topic being studied. In this study, data was not obtained through field

observations or direct interviews, but rather through a review of literature related to inclusive education and early childhood education.

A qualitative approach was chosen because this study emphasizes understanding the meaning, concepts, and interpretations of Mel Ainscow's thinking on inclusive education. Qualitative research is not oriented toward numbers or statistical measurements, but rather emphasizes in-depth analysis of the phenomena under study. Through this approach, researchers seek to understand how the concept of inclusion is viewed in the world of education and its relevance to the implementation of PAUD.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from works directly related to Mel Ainscow's thinking on inclusive education, including books, scientific articles, and academic journals. Meanwhile, secondary data came from various supporting references, such as educational books, previous research results, education policy documents, and other scientific papers discussing inclusive education for early childhood. These various sources were used to strengthen the analysis and provide a broader picture of the implementation of inclusive education.

Data collection was conducted through documentation techniques. Researchers identified, read, recorded, and categorized various literature related to the research focus. This process was carried out in stages to ensure the data obtained was truly relevant and aligned with the research needs. The literature used was selected based on the credibility of the sources, the appropriateness of the theme, and its relationship to the concept of inclusive education and early childhood education. During this stage, researchers also reviewed previous research results to observe the development of studies on inclusive education from various perspectives.

The collected data was then analyzed using content analysis techniques. The analysis was conducted by understanding the content of the literature, identifying main ideas, and then connecting various concepts found in the research sources. Researchers systematically interpreted the data to gain a comprehensive understanding of inclusive education from Mel Ainscow's perspective and its application in early childhood education. The analysis process focuses not only on gathering theories but also on examining the relevance of these ideas to the conditions of inclusive education in early childhood education (PAUD).

Throughout the research process, the researcher strives to maintain objectivity by using academically credible sources. Furthermore, various data collected are compared and critically reviewed to produce a more comprehensive discussion. This step is crucial to avoid one-sided understandings and to strengthen the validity of the study.

Through this library research method, it is hoped that the research will provide a clear picture of the concept of inclusive education in PAUD from Mel Ainscow's perspective. This approach also allows the researcher to elaborate on various principles of inclusion in greater depth, allowing the research results to serve as a reflection on the development of early childhood education that is more open, equitable, and respectful of student diversity.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Inclusive Education According to Mel Ainscow

Mel Ainscow's thinking on inclusive education stems from the belief that every child has the right to receive an equal education in an equal learning environment (Ainscow & Chapman, 2025). Education should not limit students based on physical condition, intellectual ability, social background, or other specific characteristics. From Ainscow's perspective, schools have a responsibility to adapt their learning systems to children's needs, rather than forcing them to conform to a rigid system.

The concept of inclusiveness developed by Mel Ainscow not only highlights the presence of children with special needs in mainstream schools but goes beyond that. Inclusive education is understood as a continuous process to eliminate various barriers that can hinder student participation in learning. These barriers can arise from teaching methods, school culture, educational policies, and even social attitudes that still view differences as problematic.

Ainscow places participation at the core of inclusive education (Ainscow & Messiou, 2018). Children are not simply present in class but are truly involved in all learning activities and social interactions at school. Physical presence without active involvement cannot be considered a complete inclusive education practice. Therefore, teachers need to create a learning environment that allows every child to feel accepted, valued, and given the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

In the context of early childhood education, this concept is highly relevant because the developmental characteristics of children at this age are highly diverse. Some children respond quickly to learning, while others require more intensive support. Some children are able to interact easily, while others require time to adjust to their social environment. Through an inclusive approach, all these differences are seen as a natural part of a child's development, not a reason to treat them in a way that limits their learning opportunities.

Mel Ainscow's perspective also emphasizes the importance of creating a school culture that values diversity (Muhamad Restu Fauzi & Hamami, 2022; Muhammad Restu Fauzi, Hamami, & Kim, 2024). The educational environment serves not only as a place for delivering

learning materials but also as a social space that shapes children's attitudes toward others. When schools are able to build a culture of mutual respect and acceptance of differences, children will learn to understand the values of empathy and togetherness from an early age.

Furthermore, according to Ainscow, inclusive education requires collaboration from various parties. Teachers, principals, parents, and the community need to have a shared understanding of the importance of education that is open to all children. Inclusive education cannot be optimally implemented if it is solely the responsibility of teachers in the classroom. Support from the surrounding environment significantly influences the success of inclusive education, especially in fostering social acceptance of children with different learning needs.

Another concept emphasized by Ainscow is the importance of identifying learning barriers. From this perspective, learning difficulties do not always stem from a child's condition, but can be caused by an inflexible learning system. For example, overly monotonous teaching methods can make it difficult for some children to understand the material. Therefore, teachers need to develop more adaptive learning strategies so that all students can participate comfortably in learning activities.

Mel Ainscow's thinking demonstrates that inclusive education is not merely an administrative policy, but rather a paradigm shift in how students are viewed. Every child is positioned as an individual with the ability and potential to develop if provided with a supportive learning environment. Thus, inclusive education is an effort to create educational equity that can truly be experienced by all children without exception.

Implementation of Inclusive Education in Early Childhood Education

Implementing inclusive education in early childhood education (PAUD) requires a flexible learning approach that is oriented toward the needs of children. In practice, teachers are required to understand that each student has different developmental characteristics. These differences are evident in how children communicate, play, understand instructions, and interact with their surroundings. Therefore, the learning process cannot be carried out using a uniform approach.

One form of implementation of inclusive education in PAUD is seen through adapting learning activities that enable all children to actively participate. Teachers typically use play, storytelling, singing, and group activities to create a fun and non-pressurizing learning environment. This approach helps students feel comfortable participating in learning, including children who require special attention in their development.

The classroom environment is also a crucial part of implementing inclusive education. A child-friendly learning space will help create a sense of security and increase student participation. Teachers need to foster positive interactions so that children do not feel discriminated against based on their abilities. In some situations, teachers provide additional support to children experiencing learning difficulties without separating them from their peers. This approach helps children feel part of the learning group.

The implementation of inclusive education in early childhood education (PAUD) is not only related to classroom learning activities but also encompasses the development of social relationships among students. Children are taught to help each other, respect differences, and play together without discrimination. These habits have a significant impact on children's social and emotional development. They learn to understand that each individual has their own unique characteristics that must be respected.

The role of teachers in inclusive education is crucial to the success of learning. Teachers serve not only as transmitters of material but also as facilitators, helping children develop according to their abilities. In certain situations, teachers need to modify learning to make it more easily understood by students. For example, the use of visual media, educational games, or motor activities can help children grasp the material more concretely.

In addition to teachers, parental involvement is a crucial factor in supporting inclusive education in PAUD. Communication between schools and families helps teachers understand children's needs more deeply. Parents can also provide information about their children's development at home so that the learning process can be tailored to the students' circumstances. Good collaboration between schools and families will facilitate the achievement of inclusive education goals.

However, the implementation of inclusive education in PAUD still faces various challenges. Some educational institutions lack adequate facilities to support the diverse needs of children. Furthermore, some teachers still lack specific training in inclusive learning. This often hinders the learning process from running optimally.

Another obstacle arises from society's perspective on children with different learning needs. In some situations, attitudes persist that children with special needs are a burden on the learning process. Such views can impact social acceptance within the school environment. Therefore, inclusive education requires support not only from educational institutions but also from the wider community.

Overall, the implementation of inclusive education in early childhood education (PAUD) demonstrates that learning success is greatly influenced by the readiness of the educational environment to embrace student diversity. When schools are able to create a learning environment that is open, safe, and respectful of each child, the educational process becomes more meaningful. The principle of inclusiveness goes beyond providing access to learning, but also ensures that all children have equal opportunities to grow and develop in a humane educational environment.

Analysis of Mel Ainscow's Thoughts on Inclusive Education in Early Childhood Education

Mel Ainscow's insights into inclusive education offer a fundamental shift in how students are viewed in educational settings. Ainscow doesn't view diversity as a problem that must be isolated from the school system, but rather as a social reality that must be accepted and responded to wisely. In the context of Early Childhood Education (PAUD), this perspective holds significant relevance, as early childhood is the initial stage in the formation of children's understanding of themselves and their social environment.

At an early age, children lack the strong social boundaries that adults do (Nabila et al., 2023). They tend to interact easily as long as the environment supports this process. Therefore, implementing inclusive education in PAUD has a significant chance of success if implemented appropriately. Children learn to accept differences naturally through play, cooperation, and communication in everyday school life. In this regard, Ainscow's insights emphasize that inclusive education is not simply an administrative system that combines children into one classroom, but rather an effort to build a learning culture that values all students without exception.

One key point in Ainscow's insights is the elimination of barriers to learning. This perspective is compelling because it shifts the focus from "children's shortcomings" to "the limitations of the education system." Until now, children with learning difficulties have often been considered the source of problems in the learning process. However, in many situations, these difficulties arise because learning methods are inflexible or the school environment is unable to accommodate the diverse needs of students. This thinking critiques an education system that is too focused on uniformity of ability (Muhamad Restu Fauzi & Usman, 2024).

In early childhood education (PAUD) practice, an overly uniform approach often creates problems. For example, teachers demand that all children be able to follow instructions in the same amount of time without considering each individual's development. As a result, children who take longer tend to be seen as lagging behind. In fact, early childhood

development occurs at different rates. Some children are quick in language skills but slow in social skills. Conversely, some children are active motorically but require support in concentrating on learning. From Ainscow's perspective, this diversity should not be forced to conform to the same standards.

However, Mel Ainscow's ideas are not without criticism. Some argue that the concept of inclusive education is too idealistic to be implemented universally, especially in developing countries that still face limited educational facilities. Schools often lack the necessary teaching staff, learning resources, and professional support to address the diverse needs of children. Under these conditions, the implementation of inclusive education is considered to burden teachers, as they must deal with students with diverse characteristics in one class.

This criticism is quite realistic when viewed from the field. Not all PAUD institutions are equally prepared to implement inclusive education. Many teachers have not received specific training in adaptive learning strategies. Furthermore, the large number of students often divides teachers' attention, resulting in suboptimal support for children.

However, upon closer examination, Ainscow's thinking does not require schools to be perfect overnight. Inclusive education is understood as a process that continually evolves according to the capabilities of the educational institution. This means that schools can start with simple steps such as building a culture of acceptance of differences, improving communication patterns with children, and creating more flexible learning activities. Therefore, inclusive education should not be understood as a burdensome requirement, but rather as a gradual direction for educational development.

Another criticism arises from the assumption that inclusive education can hinder the development of children who have faster learning abilities. Some parents worry that having children with special needs in regular classes will slow down the overall learning process. This view often arises because education is still understood solely as academic achievement.

When viewed from the perspective of early childhood education, this criticism is not entirely accurate. Early childhood education focuses not only on academic abilities but also on social, emotional, moral, and interpersonal development. Children who learn in an inclusive environment actually gain richer social experiences. They learn patience, cooperation, understanding of others' feelings, and appreciation for diversity. These values are an essential part of developing a child's character, often not achieved through academic learning alone.

Ainscow's thinking also emphasizes the importance of active participation by all students. In practice, this concept encourages teachers to be more creative in designing learning. Teachers are no longer the primary focus of the learning process, but rather facilitators

who help children find learning methods that best suit their needs (Nurjaman, 2026). This approach is highly appropriate for early childhood education (PAUD) because young children tend to learn through direct experience, play, exploration, and social interaction.

Furthermore, an inclusive approach helps reduce stigma against children with developmental disabilities. When children grow up in an environment accustomed to diversity, they are less likely to label their peers negatively. This has a long-term impact on the formation of a more open and humane social culture. In a society that often views differences as weaknesses, inclusive education can be an important tool for fostering social awareness from an early age.

Thus, Mel Ainscow's thinking is not only relevant in education but also has a broad social dimension. Inclusive education in PAUD is not simply an effort to provide access to learning for all children, but rather a process of building an environment that respects human dignity regardless of individual circumstances. This thinking provides an important basis for developing education that is fairer and oriented towards the needs of students as a whole.

Implications of Inclusive Education for Early Childhood Education Development

The implementation of inclusive education has had a significant impact on the development of early childhood education (PAUD), both in terms of learning, school culture, and social relationships within the educational environment. The introduction of the inclusive concept encourages PAUD institutions to move away from a uniform learning approach. Each child is viewed as a unique individual with different needs, abilities, and learning styles. This perspective is gradually shifting the orientation of early childhood education to become more humane and centered on student development.

One of the most visible implications is the changing role of teachers in the learning process. Early childhood education (PAUD) teachers are no longer simply required to master the material or play activities; they also need to understand the developmental characteristics of each child. They are required to be more sensitive to their students' conditions, including recognizing learning barriers and their potential (Rahmawati, Nursalim, & Purwoko, 2025). This situation demands increased teacher competency, both in pedagogical, social, and emotional aspects.

In practice, teachers who implement an inclusive approach tend to be more flexible in managing learning. They do not force all children to achieve the same results within the same timeframe. Instead, they provide space for students to develop according to their individual abilities. For example, some children may find it easier to understand learning through pictures

and visual games, while others may be more responsive to motor activities or verbal communication. This approach makes the learning process more adaptive and less stressful.

On the other hand, inclusive education also has implications for the social environment in PAUD. Children who learn in an inclusive environment tend to have better social skills because they are accustomed to interacting with diverse peers. They learn to accept differences without prejudice. These experiences are crucial in shaping children's character, helping them grow into individuals with high empathy and tolerance. However, the implementation of inclusive education in early childhood education (PAUD) development is not always straightforward. One frequently encountered issue is the limited educational resources and facilities. Not all PAUD institutions have learning spaces that support the needs of children with various developmental disabilities. Some schools also lack educational play equipment that can facilitate effective inclusive learning.

This situation has given rise to criticism that inclusive education is merely an ideal concept that is difficult to implement. It is believed that schools with limited resources will face significant difficulties in meeting the demands of inclusive education. Some even argue that implementing inclusive education risks reducing the quality of learning if schools are not adequately prepared.

This criticism is understandable, as the quality of education is indeed related to the readiness of its support systems. However, inclusive education does not always depend on expensive facilities or complex technology. The most fundamental issue lies in the educators' perspectives and the school culture towards children. An environment that values diversity often has a greater influence than simply the availability of facilities. Teachers who are open, patient, and able to build positive relationships with students can create an inclusive atmosphere even with limited resources.

Another implication of inclusive education is the increased need for collaboration between schools and parents. In early childhood education, family involvement has a significant impact on a child's development. Inclusive education encourages closer communication between teachers and parents to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the child's needs. This relationship is crucial because a child's development is shaped not only at school but also by the family environment.

Furthermore, inclusive education also encourages policy changes in the development of Early Childhood Education (PAUD). Educational institutions need to provide training programs for teachers, improve learning systems, and build school environments that are more

welcoming to diverse learners. Educational policies that support inclusion will help schools establish a clear direction in developing a fair and open learning system for all children.

In the long term, inclusive education has a significant social impact on community life. Children who grow up in an inclusive educational environment are more accustomed to living alongside differences (Fibrianto, Yuniar, & Apriadi, 2022). They are less likely to underestimate others simply because of their particular circumstances. This social awareness is an important foundation for building a more tolerant society that values human values (Restu Fauzi, 2019).

Therefore, the development of inclusive education-based PAUD is not only related to the needs of children with special needs, but also involves a comprehensive paradigm shift in education. Education is no longer just about pursuing academic achievement, but rather about building a learning space that respects every child as an individual who has the right to grow, learn, and be accepted in their social environment.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that inclusive education in Early Childhood Education, from Mel Ainscow's perspective, emphasizes the importance of involving all children in the learning process without discrimination based on differences in abilities, backgrounds, or developmental conditions. Inclusive education is understood as an effort to create a learning environment that reduces learning barriers and increases children's participation across the board. In the context of Early Childhood Education (PAUD), the implementation of inclusive education is oriented not only toward educational access but also toward creating a social environment that values diversity and supports children's social, emotional, and cognitive development from an early age. The research findings indicate that implementing inclusive education in PAUD requires teacher preparedness, flexible learning, parental support, and a school culture that is open to diversity. However, its implementation still faces various obstacles, such as limited facilities, a lack of educator competence in inclusive learning, and unequal public understanding of the importance of inclusive education.

Based on these conclusions, PAUD institutions need to improve the quality of inclusive learning through teacher training, the development of adaptive learning methods, and strengthening collaboration with parents and the surrounding community. The government is also expected to provide more optimal support in the form of policies, mentoring, and the provision of facilities to support the implementation of inclusive education at the PAUD level. This study has limitations because it used only a desk study approach, so the discussion still

focuses on theoretical analysis and does not directly describe the implementation conditions in the field. Therefore, further research is recommended to conduct field research with a more in-depth approach to gain a more concrete understanding of inclusive education practices in early childhood education, including the various challenges and strategies for addressing them in the Indonesian educational context.

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