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# Nurturing Potential: Unveiling the Psychological Landscape of Care and Education for Children with Special Needs

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**ABSTRAK:**

The focus of this research is on the important role of psychology in shaping the care and education of children with special needs. In parenting, family psychology and the personality of children with special needs prove themselves to be critical elements in creating a positive environment. On the educational side, developmental psychology for children with special needs guides educators in designing appropriate learning approaches, while inclusive education, with a focus on inclusive psychology, increases the accessibility and success of learning. Psychological challenges, such as stigma and emotional stress, faced by parents and educators are also highlighted. Psychological strategies such as counselling, group support, and training have proven effective in overcoming these challenges. In conclusion, this article highlights the importance of integrating psychology in the context of care and education of children with special needs to create an inclusive environment that supports the optimal development of these children

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## 1. Introduction

Children with special needs are part of society who require special attention and support in their care and education. The care and education of these children requires a deep understanding of psychological aspects to achieve optimal results(Rahardjo, 2022). This article will discuss the importance of understanding psychology in the care and education of children with special needs.

Children with special needs involve individuals with physical, cognitive, emotional, or social needs that are different from those of children in general(Al Badawi & Suparno, 2019). In this context, the role of psychology is very important to understand the needs and potential of each child holistically. Developmental psychology helps understand the developmental stages of children with special needs(Kesavelu et al., 2021). Through this approach, parents and educators can identify the child's level of development, provide appropriate stimulus, and understand the impact of potential developmental obstacles.

Psychological aspects in parenting include: Family psychology plays a key role in providing necessary support to children with special needs. Supporting families in understanding and coping with stress is an integral part of effective parenting(Cheng & Lai, 2023). Understanding the personality of a child with special needs helps in creating an environment that supports and facilitates positive development. Personality psychology opens the way to responding to individual needs more effectively(Juvonen et al., 2019).

Inclusive education emphasizes the importance of understanding individual differences and creating a learning environment that supports all students. The psychology of inclusive education guides educators in designing learning strategies that are accessible to all students(Reyaz Ahmad Bhat, 2023). Identifying the learning styles and cognitive preferences of children with special needs is the key to successful learning. Learning psychology helps in designing learning approaches that suit the needs of each child(Cardino & Ortega-Dela Cruz, 2020)

This article will also discuss various psychological challenges faced by parents and educators in caring for and educating children with special needs. Provides insight into psychological strategies that can be used to overcome these challenges, build resilience, and improve the quality of life for children with special needs.

The problem formulation for this article entitled "Care and Education of Children with Special Needs in Psychological Review" is formulated as follows: (1) How can an inclusive psychology approach in education increase the accessibility and success of learning for children with special needs in the school environment? (2) How can learning psychology help in identifying the learning styles and cognitive preferences of children with special needs, and how can this be integrated into effective learning strategies? (3) What psychological challenges do parents and educators face in caring for and educating children with special needs, and how can psychological strategies help overcome these challenges? (4) How can implementing psychological strategies help build the resilience of children with special needs and improve their quality of life?

The objectives of this research are: (1) Analyzing Inclusive Psychological Approaches in Education: Evaluating how the application of inclusive psychological approaches in education can increase the accessibility and success of learning for children with special needs in the school environment, (2) Assess the Impact of Learning Psychology on Children with Special Needs: Examining how understanding the psychology of learning can help identify the learning styles and cognitive preferences of children with special needs, and how these can be integrated into effective learning strategies, (3) Analyzing Psychological Challenges and Overcoming Strategies: Identifying the psychological challenges faced by parents and educators in caring for and educating children with special needs, as well as analyzing psychological strategies that can help overcome these challenges, (4) Studying the Impact of Implementing Psychological Strategies: Assessing how implementing psychological strategies can help build resilience in children with special needs and improve their quality of life.

Through achieving this goal, the research aims to contribute to further understanding of the role of psychology in the care and education of children with special needs, with the hope of improving the quality of life and optimal development of these children.

## 2. Methodology

**Research subject**

The subjects of this research were 6 educational psychologists, teachers, accompanying teachers, counselors and parents of students involved in the care and education of children with special needs as informants, representing each group of experts, teachers, accompanying teachers, counselors and parents(Prayogo & Setiawan, 2022).

**Data collection technique**

Interview, involves in-depth interviews with each informant to obtain their personal views and experiences regarding the care and education of children with special needs. Observation, Participatory observation during learning activities or parent-child interactions to gain direct insight into parenting and education. Focus Group Discussion (FGD), hold an FGD with a group of teachers and educational psychologists to discuss approaches and strategies in overcoming the challenges of caring for and educating children with special needs. Documentation, collecting data from related documents, such as specific learning programs, child notebooks, or training materials used.(Taherdoost, 2021)

**Data Validity**

Data Triangulation with comparing results from various data sources (interviews, observations, FGDs, and documentation) to ensure the validity and accuracy of the findings.(Suryani et al., 2020)

**Data analysis**

Data analysis was carried out thematically, namely by identifying, grouping and analyzing main findings based on themes that emerged from the qualitative data collected(Rosairo, 2023).

**Research Ethics**

Ensure confidentiality of information and obtain permission from all informants before starting research. Explain the purpose of the research, participants' rights, and obtain written consent(Manandhar & Joshi, 2020).

**Research procedure**

Identify informants and schedule interviews, FGDs and observations. Develop interview and FGD guides with structured questions in accordance with research objectives. Record and document observation results. Conduct regular data analysis during the data collection process(Kabir, 2018).

**Presentation and Reporting of Results**

Summarize the main findings in narrative form and present research results in a comprehensive report. This research method is designed to provide an in-depth understanding of the experiences and opinions of various stakeholders involved in the care and education of children with special needs, as well as enable the identification of effective strategies and approaches.

## 3. Result And Discussion

**Application of an inclusive psychology approach in education**

Based on the results of research through interviews with psychologists, information was obtained that the parenting strategies applied for children with special needs according to research subject information are:

*"Providing good habits in daily activities" (interview with E, 11 February 2024)*

*"Actively involve all family members and convey the condition and needs of special children. This also includes people who are directly related to children such as teachers, pedagogues, therapists and the community environment. The point is to build inclusive families and communities" (interview with A, 11 February 2024)*

*"I use a mixed parenting style. Sometimes it needs to be authoritarian so that children are trained to do or not do something, but for the most part I apply a democratic parenting style (giving brief explanations and reasons why something can/should not be done).*

*"The most important key is consistency of care from me and other substitute caregivers" (interview with WS, 11 February 2024)*

Based on the excerpt from the interview results above, it can be explained that inclusive psychological parenting strategies in education include habituation of good behavior, actively involving all family members, involving teachers, psychologists and the community. The parenting style used is democratic, although sometimes authoritarian.

The results of research on the education of children with special needs, from a psychological perspective regarding psychologists' experience with the education system for children with special needs, obtained the following information:

*"Still far from expectations, there are not many trained human resources (interview with E, 11 February 2024)*

*"Inclusive schools are the best choice, provided that inclusive schools have competent Learning Support Units and human resources. So far, Allah has provided sustenance to us and our children with the existence of inclusive schools whose programs are running well. "The school environment is conducive and thank God there is no bullying" (interview with A, 11 February 2024)*

*"It still requires a lot of improvement (interview with WS, 11 February 2024)*

Based on the quote from the interview above, it can be explained that the education system for children with special needs is still far from expectations and still needs improvement. Parents should choose to send children with special needs to inclusive schools provided that the inclusive school has a Learning Support Unit and competent human resources.

The application of an inclusive psychology approach in education can increase the accessibility and success of learning for children with special needs because this approach emphasizes inclusivity, acceptance and deep adaptation to the needs of diverse students (Madanih, 2023). Here are some reasons why an inclusive psychology approach can provide significant benefits:

Acceptance and Recognition. Diversity is valued, An inclusive approach creates an environment that values and recognizes the diversity of students, including children with special needs. This creates a positive climate at school that supports social and emotional development (Rozenfelde, 2016).

Collaborative Learning or Cooperation between students. Children with special needs can interact and learn with their peers. This enables collaborative learning where students help each other, creating an inclusive learning climate.

Curriculum Adjustment and Individual adjustment. Inclusive psychology refers to adapting the curriculum to meet the individual needs of each student. Teachers can modify learning materials to suit the level of understanding and needs of children with special needs (Rahmawati et al., 2021).

Additional Support. Companions and Resources, this approach supports the use of companions or additional resources to provide individual assistance to children with special needs. This may include special help in class, mentoring in activities, or providing additional materials(Cavallazzi et al., 2022).

Emotional and Social Education. Development of social skills, Inclusive psychology pays special attention to the development of children's social skills, including children with special needs. This can increase children's social interaction and integration in the school environment(Yang et al., 2015). By integrating children with special needs in an inclusive educational context, this approach can help reduce stigma and negative perceptions of differences.

Life Skills Education: Teaching practical skills: Inclusive psychology can include teaching practical life skills to children with special needs, helping them become more independent and prepare for everyday life.

Active Participation: Encourages participation: An inclusive approach encourages active participation of children with special needs in various aspects of school life, including extracurricular activities and collaborative projects(Juvonen et al., 2019)(Asbjørnslett et al., 2015).

By recognizing the uniqueness of each student and providing a supportive environment, an inclusive psychology approach creates opportunities for children with special needs to develop optimally in their academic, social and emotional aspects. This provides a strong foundation for increasing accessibility and successful learning for children with special needs in educational settings.

**Learning psychology plays an important role in identifying learning styles and cognitive preferences**

Learning psychology plays an important role in identifying the learning styles and cognitive preferences of children with special needs. Recognizing individual learning characteristics allows for the development of more effective and supportive learning strategies(Cardino & Ortega-Dela Cruz, 2020). Here is how learning psychology can help with this:

1. Observation and Evaluation. In-depth Observation: Involves observing the behavior and learning responses of children with special needs. Understand how they respond to information and learning materials.
2. Interviews and Consultations. Consultations with Parents and Teachers: Obtain information from parents and teachers about children's learning experiences in various contexts. This can provide additional insight into learning preferences and challenges that may be faced(Bashir, 2023).
3. Psychological Testing or Psychometric Testing. Using psychometric tests or instruments designed to identify learning styles and cognitive preferences in a more structured manner(Rehman, 2016).
4. Interdisciplinary Team Collaboration. Collaboration with Experts in Various Fields, involve psychologists, special educators, and mental health professionals to discuss children's learning characteristics holistically(Bowman et al., 2021).
5. Use of Educational Technology. Interactive Learning Apps and Tools: Use technology to identify and track children's cognitive preferences, and present learning materials according to their learning styles(Persichitte, 2018).
6. Observation of Emotional Reactions. Emotional Response to Learning: Understanding how children with special needs respond emotionally to learning situations can provide clues about learning preferences and styles(Frivold Kostøl & Cameron, 2021).
7. Material Adjustments and Modifications. Curriculum Adjustment: Modify learning materials to suit the child's level of understanding and learning style. This may include the use of multimedia, visuals, or a more practical approach(Taber, 2013).
8. Differentiated Learning, with Differentiated Learning Approaches, Provide a variety of learning methods, such as visual, auditory, or kinesthetic learning, to give special needs children choices according to their cognitive preferences(Herdianto et al., 2023).
9. Regular Feedback and Evaluation. Continuous Monitoring, provides regular feedback to children and adapts learning strategies according to their responses, ensuring appropriateness and effectiveness(Obilor, 2019).

Integrating the results from identifying the learning styles and cognitive preferences of children with special needs into learning strategies allows for a more personalized and supportive approach. By paying special attention to the way children learn, educators can create a more inclusive learning environment and provide greater opportunities for their academic and social development.

**Psychological challenges faced by parents and educators in caring for and educating children with special needs**

Based on the results of this research, the psychological challenges faced by parents and educators in caring for and educating children with special needs include:

Stigma and Emotional Stress. Parents and educators may face social stigmatism related to children with special needs, which can cause emotional stress. Psychological Strategy: Increasing public understanding and awareness of the needs of children with special needs, as well as providing counseling support for parents and educators(Salleh et al., 2022).

Limited Understanding. A lack of understanding of a child's specific condition can be a barrier to providing appropriate support. Psychological Strategies: Psychological training programs and workshops for parents and educators to increase their knowledge about the needs and strategies for caring for children with special needs(Suharsiwi et al., 2023).

Emotional Adjustment. Parents and educators may have difficulty adjusting to the different emotional needs of special needs children. Psychological Strategies: Psychological counseling and support to help parents and educators manage stress and design positive adjustment strategies(Cheng & Lai, 2023).

Future Uncertainty. The future of children with special needs is often unclear, causing worry and uncertainty for parents and educators. Psychological Strategies: Cognitive behavioral therapy or counseling to help manage anxiety and focus on steps that can be taken in planning the child's future(James et al., 2020).

Education Access Restrictions. Obstacles in getting educational services that suit the needs of children with special needs. Psychological Strategies: Psychological guidance and advocacy support to help parents and educators navigate the education system and ensure children's rights are met(Bani Odeh & Lach, 2023).

Lack of Social Support. Social isolation due to lack of support and understanding from the surrounding environment. Psychological Strategies: Establishment of support groups and social intervention programs for parents and educators to share experiences and strategies(Brandt et al., 2022).

Psychological strategies can include a variety of approaches, such as individual counseling, group therapy, skills training, and psychosocial support programs. In addition, collaboration with mental health professionals and educational psychologists can provide more in-depth and targeted assistance according to each individual's needs (Widaningtyas & Sutanti, 2022). It is important to remember that each child with special needs is unique, and psychological strategies must be tailored to the specific characteristics and needs of the child and his family

## 4. Conclusion

In a psychological review, the care and education of children with special needs can be directed towards a more holistic and effective approach. Psychological understanding not only provides deep insight into children's needs, but also helps create an environment that supports their optimal development. From the discussion of the problem regarding "Care and Education of Children with Special Needs in Psychological Review," it can be concluded that understanding and applying psychological principles in the care and education of children with special needs plays a critical role in creating an environment that supports their optimal development. The following are the conclusions from each aspect of the problem: Psychology in Parenting: Family psychology and the personality of a child with special needs play an important role in shaping the parenting experience. Understanding family psychology helps provide necessary support and deal with parental stress. The application of the principles of personality psychology helps create an environment that supports the positive development of children with special needs. Psychology in Education: Developmental psychology of children with special needs guides educators in designing appropriate learning approaches. Inclusive education with a focus on inclusive psychology increases the accessibility and learning success of children with special needs. Learning psychology helps identify learning styles and cognitive preferences, paving the way for more effective learning strategies. Psychological Challenges and Strategies: Psychological challenges such as stigma, emotional stress, and uncertainty about the future can affect parents and educators. Psychological strategies, such as counseling, group support, and training, help overcome these challenges. Public awareness, education and psychological support can help reduce stigma and increase understanding of children with special needs.

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