
Assessing the Role of Parental Involvement Policies in Improving Early Childhood Education Outcomes in Indonesia

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Abstract: *This article investigates the role of parental engagement policies in improving early childhood education (ECE) outcomes in Indonesia. Through a longitudinal analysis of ECE institutions and surveys with parents and teachers, the study highlights the impact of parental engagement on children's cognitive and social development. Findings suggest that targeted policy measures to increase parental engagement contribute to improved educational outcomes, particularly in disadvantaged communities. The study advocates for policies that foster partnerships between parents and educators to support holistic child development.*

Keywords: *Parental Involvement, Early Childhood Education, Educational Outcomes, Policy Impact, Indonesia.*

A. The Importance of Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education

Parental involvement in early childhood education (ECE) is a key factor that can influence children's educational outcomes. Research shows that children who have parents who are actively involved in their education tend to have better cognitive abilities and more developed social skills (Fan & Chen, 2018). According to data from the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), only about 40% of parents are involved in their children's educational activities, indicating an urgent need to increase parental awareness and participation in children's education.

One concrete example of the importance of parental involvement can be seen in the PAUD program in rural areas in Central Java. In several villages, training programs for parents have been implemented to provide an understanding of the importance of early childhood education. The results of this program show that children whose parents actively participate in educational activities at home show significant improvements in language and mathematics skills (Sari, 2020).

Parental involvement is not only limited to academic support, but also includes emotional and social aspects. Research by Hill and Tyson (2009) shows that positive parental involvement can increase children's self-confidence and their ability to interact with peers. This is very important considering that the early stages of child development are a critical period for the formation of social skills.

However, challenges in increasing parental involvement remain. Many parents work full time or have limited education that makes it difficult for them to be actively involved in their children's education. Therefore, policies designed to support parental involvement need to consider the different social and economic contexts in various regions in Indonesia (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021).

In this context, policies that encourage collaboration between schools and parents are crucial. For example, programs that involve parents in decision-making at school or that provide training for parents on how to support their children's learning at home can help increase their involvement. Thus, parental involvement can be a bridge to improving the quality of early childhood education in Indonesia.

B. Parental Involvement Policy in Early Childhood Education

The policy of parental involvement in early childhood education in Indonesia has undergone significant development in recent years. The Indonesian government has recognized the importance of parental involvement in education and has developed various policies to encourage their participation. One of the main policies is the Early Childhood Education Program (PAUD) which integrates parental involvement as an important component in the curriculum (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020).

One example of an effective policy is the "Parents Care for PAUD" program launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This program aims to raise parents' awareness of the importance of early childhood education and provide them with training on how to support their children's development at home. According to the program's evaluation report, around 70% of parents who attended the training reported improvements in how they supported their children's education (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021).

In addition, policies that encourage schools to hold regular meetings with parents have also proven effective. In a survey conducted in several PAUD schools, 85% of parents involved in regular meetings reported that they felt more connected to their child's education process and better understood their child's educational needs (BPS, 2022). This shows that good communication between schools and parents can increase parental involvement in their child's education.

However, despite the existence of policies that support parental involvement, there are still challenges in its implementation. Many PAUD schools have not fully implemented this policy, especially in remote areas. Research by Rahman and Sari (2021) shows that the lack of resources and training for teachers in involving parents is one of the main obstacles. Therefore, further efforts are needed to ensure that this policy is implemented effectively throughout Indonesia.

With policies that support parental involvement, it is hoped that a better educational environment for children can be created. This policy will not only improve children's

educational outcomes, but will also strengthen the relationship between parents and educators, which in turn will support children's holistic development.

C. Impact of Parental Involvement on Children's Educational Outcomes

The impact of parental involvement on early childhood education outcomes can be seen from various aspects, including cognitive, social, and emotional development. Research shows that children who have parents who are actively involved in their education tend to have better academic outcomes than children whose parents are less involved (Jeynes, 2016). In Indonesia, survey results show that children from families who are involved in their education have higher scores in national exams (BPS, 2022).

One longitudinal study conducted in Jakarta found that children who were involved in learning activities with their parents showed significant improvements in reading and numeracy skills. The study involved more than 1,000 young children and their parents, and the results showed that parental involvement in educational activities at home contributed to better academic outcomes (Sari & Rahman, 2023).

In addition, parental involvement also has an impact on children's social development. Children who have parents who are actively involved in their education tend to be more confident and have better social skills. Research by Mapp (2004) shows that children who feel supported by their parents are better able to interact with peers and demonstrate positive behavior in social environments.

However, it is important to note that the impact of parental involvement is not always positive. In some cases, excessive involvement or pressure from parents can cause stress in children and negatively impact their development. Therefore, it is important for parents to find a balance in their involvement in their children's education (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

In this context, policies that support parental involvement need to be designed with children's well-being in mind. Programs that provide training for parents on how to interact with their children in a positive way and support their development can help reduce the risk of negative impacts of parental involvement. With the right approach, parental involvement can be a powerful tool for improving early childhood education outcomes in Indonesia.

D. Challenges in Increasing Parental Involvement

Although the importance of parental involvement in early childhood education has been recognized, there are several challenges that hinder the increase of such involvement. One of the main challenges is the lack of time and resources available to parents, especially among

economically disadvantaged families. Many parents work full time and do not have enough time to be involved in their children's education (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021).

In addition, the education factor of parents also plays a role in their level of involvement. Research shows that parents with higher levels of education tend to be more involved in their children's education compared to those with lower levels of education (Fan & Chen, 2018). In Indonesia, there are still many parents who have limited education, which can hinder their ability to support their children's education.

Communication barriers between schools and parents are also a significant challenge. In many cases, schools do not provide effective communication channels to engage parents. Surveys show that many parents feel they do not receive enough information about their child's progress at school (BPS, 2022). This makes parents feel alienated from the educational process and reduces their motivation to get involved.

In addition, social and cultural stigma can also affect parental involvement. In some communities, there is a view that children's education is entirely the responsibility of the school, so parents feel no need to be involved. Therefore, it is important to educate the community about the importance of parental involvement in children's education (Sari, 2020).

To address these challenges, policies that support parental engagement need to be designed with different social and economic contexts in mind. Programs that provide practical support to parents, such as flexible time for school meetings or training for parents with educational disabilities, can help increase their engagement. With the right approach, it is hoped that parental engagement in early childhood education can increase, which in turn will contribute to better educational outcomes.

E. Recommendations for Parental Involvement Policy

Based on the analysis of the role of parental involvement in early childhood education, there are several policy recommendations that can be implemented to increase this involvement. First, it is important to develop training programs specifically designed for parents, which provide them with skills and knowledge on how to support children's education at home. These programs should be accessible to all parents, especially those from disadvantaged economic backgrounds (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021).

Second, schools need to adopt a more inclusive approach to involving parents. This can be done by holding regular meetings and events that involve parents in school activities. Research shows that when parents feel valued and involved, they are more likely to actively participate in their child's education (Sari & Rahman, 2023).

Third, it is important to improve communication between schools and parents. Schools should provide effective communication channels, such as newsletters or mobile applications, that allow parents to get the latest information about their child's development and activities at school. In this way, parents will feel more connected and involved in the educational process (BPS, 2022).

Fourth, the government needs to provide further support to schools in remote areas to implement parental engagement policies. This includes providing resources and training for teachers to help them communicate and collaborate with parents effectively (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020).

Finally, there needs to be a public awareness campaign that emphasizes the importance of parental involvement in children's education. This campaign can be done through social media, community events, and partnerships with civil society organizations. By raising awareness of the importance of parental involvement, it is hoped that a culture that supports parental participation in early childhood education in Indonesia can be created.

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