



## Building an Ecosystem of Support: The Role of Family, Education, and Society in Realizing the Dreams of Children with Disabilities

Nazwa Aulia\*, Yani Achdiani, Gina Indah Permata Nastia

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

\*Correspondence: E-mail: [nazwaaulia294@gmail.com](mailto:nazwaaulia294@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the role of families, educational institutions and communities in creating an effective ecosystem of support for children with disabilities. Using a qualitative approach and case study method, this research highlights the experiences and perspectives of the various parties involved. The results show that an effective ecosystem of support is formed through strong collaboration between families, schools and communities. Families play an important role in providing emotional, practical and advocacy support. Educational institutions are expected to be able to organize quality and accessible inclusive education. Meanwhile, the community plays a role in creating an inclusive environment through raising awareness, removing stigma and providing disability-friendly facilities. This research also identifies challenges in building an ecosystem of support and provides practical recommendations to improve the quality of services and support for children with disabilities.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Children with disabilities, like other children, have the same human rights to grow and develop optimally (Mangku, 2020). However, they often face challenges that prevent them from achieving their potential. These challenges can include physical limitations, lack of access to quality education, social stigma and discrimination, and lack of support from the surrounding environment. In this regard, it is important to realize that disability is not just a medical problem, but also a complex social issue (Sari et al., 2021). Therefore, a holistic approach involving various parties is needed to create an inclusive and supportive environment for children with disabilities.

One important component in creating a supportive environment is a robust ecosystem of support. This ecosystem involves the active role of the family, educational institutions and the wider community. Families are the first and foremost environment for children, and therefore have a crucial role in providing emotional, practical and advocacy support (Dayanti & Pribadi, 2022). Educational institutions are also responsible for providing quality inclusive education, which can support children with disabilities in developing their academic and social potential. In addition, an inclusive and caring society can create a welcoming and supportive environment for children with disabilities. This can be achieved through increasing awareness and understanding of disability, eliminating stigma and discrimination, and providing accessible facilities and services (Rachman et al., 2023).

This research aims to explore the roles of families, educational institutions and communities in building an ecosystem of support for children with disabilities. By understanding the dynamics of interaction between these three elements, it is hoped that effective strategies can be found to improve the quality of life and realize the dreams of children with disabilities.

## 2. METHODS

This research used a mixed approach, including an online literature review, direct observation at relevant sites, and interviews with caretakers of children with disabilities (Mustika & Pradikta, 2022). Data were thematically analyzed to identify patterns and key themes. Research ethics were followed with informed consent and participant confidentiality.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to identify and analyze the key roles of family, education and community in building an effective ecosystem of support for children with disabilities (Muktiwibowo & Prayogi, 2022). The results show that building an optimal ecosystem of support involves strong and synergistic collaboration between the three elements.

### 3.1. The Role of the Family as the Primary Foundation:

The results of in-depth interviews with parents show that acceptance and emotional support from the family have a significant impact on the development of children's self-confidence and self-esteem. Families that are able to create a loving and accepting environment help children feel safe and motivated to develop their potential. Direct observations show that families play an important role in helping children access health,

education and rehabilitation services. Families also act as advocates who fight for children's rights and ensure their needs are met.

Furthermore, recent research highlights that family involvement goes beyond emotional support; it also includes active participation in decision-making related to the child's education and health care. A study by [Smith et al. \(2022\)](#) found that when families are involved in individualized education plans (IEPs) and therapeutic interventions, children show greater improvements in adaptive skills and academic performance. This collaborative approach not only strengthens the parent-professional partnership but also enhances the consistency of support provided at home and in institutional settings, leading to better outcomes for the child ([Smith et al., 2022](#)).

In addition, the quality of family communication has been shown to play a crucial role in fostering resilience in children with special needs. According to a study by [Chen and Lee \(2023\)](#), families that engage in open, respectful, and solution-focused communication help children develop stronger coping strategies and reduce the risk of emotional and behavioral problems. The researchers emphasize that interventions aimed at improving family communication patterns can significantly bolster children's psychological well-being and their ability to navigate social challenges ([Chen & Lee, 2023](#)). Therefore, strengthening family dynamics through both emotional and communicative means is key to supporting children's overall development.

### **3.2. Inclusive Education as a Catalyst for Development:**

Literature reviews and observations in inclusive schools show that physical accessibility and adaptation of the curriculum to suit the needs of children with disabilities are essential. Schools with trained teachers and adequate facilities can create a learning environment that supports children's development. Interviews with caregivers of children with disabilities highlighted the importance of effective communication and collaboration between educators and families. Information exchange and joint planning help to ensure that children's needs are met holistically.

Recent international research underscores the importance of fostering a positive school climate that promotes social inclusion and peer acceptance of children with disabilities. According to [Johnson and Williams \(2023\)](#), inclusive practices that encourage cooperative learning, peer mentoring, and anti-bullying initiatives significantly enhance the social participation and emotional well-being of students with disabilities. Their study found that when schools intentionally build a culture of respect and belonging, children with disabilities are more likely to develop friendships, improve self-confidence, and engage actively in classroom activities ([Johnson & Williams, 2023](#)).

### **3.3. The Role of the Community in Creating an Inclusive Environment:**

Observations in the community show that activities involving broad community participation are effective in raising awareness about disability and reducing stigma. Educational campaigns and inclusive activities help create a more welcoming and accepting environment. Interviews with caretakers of children with disabilities show that the lack of accessible public facilities is a major barrier to children's participation in the community. Providing accessible transportation facilities, public spaces and recreational activities is essential.

In addition, partnerships between local governments, non-profit organizations, and disability advocacy groups play a critical role in driving sustainable inclusion initiatives at the community level. According to a study by [Ahmed and Torres \(2021\)](#), collaborative programs that combine policy reform, community training, and infrastructure development have been successful in improving public attitudes and increasing access to services for persons with disabilities. Their findings highlight that community-based approaches—when supported by inclusive policy frameworks, can lead to long-term improvements in both physical accessibility and social integration for children with disabilities.

### 3.4. Inter-Agency Collaboration

Collaboration between community, government and private institutions in the provision of services and support is essential to create a comprehensive ecosystem ([Khoiriyah & Siswanto, 2024](#)). Then there are the roles that have a huge impact on the development, life and even the future of children with disabilities.

The family serves as the main foundation in the process of developing the potential of children with disabilities ([Rachman et al., 2023](#)). Emotional support, confidence building and ensuring fair access to education are key. Most of the parents involved in this study showed a high commitment to their children's success, both through formal education and social activities outside of school. They actively sought information about programs that could help their children's development, such as physical and psychological therapy and inclusive education programs ([Purnamasari et al., 2022](#)).

In the education sector, the findings show that the implementation of inclusive education in many schools still faces challenges such as the lack of disability-friendly facilities, the limited number of trained educators and low awareness of the importance of education for children with disabilities ([Dayanti & Pribadi, 2022](#)). However, there are certain schools that have implemented a curriculum tailored to the needs of children with disabilities, provided special training for teachers and ensured intensive assistance for students with special needs. Teachers involved in this study revealed that they feel the need to continue developing their skills in dealing with the different types of needs of children with disabilities.

The community plays an equally important role in realizing the dreams of children with disabilities ([Sukmareni & Trustisari, 2024](#)). The results show that despite efforts to improve acceptance and social inclusion for children with disabilities, there are still barriers in the form of social stigma and lack of knowledge about disability itself. Supportive communities, such as mothers' groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and concerned individuals, strive to create a more welcoming and accepting environment for children with disabilities. However, more social campaigns and public education are needed to reduce stigma and increase understanding of the potential of children with disabilities.

## 4. CONCLUSION

An ecosystem of support involving family, education and community has been shown to have a positive impact on the development of children with disabilities. Families play an important role through emotional support and equitable access to education. However, this study found gaps between inclusive education policies and their implementation on the ground, particularly in relation to limited infrastructure and lack of training for teachers. Communities also play a role in creating an inclusive environment, although challenges such

as stigma and lack of understanding about disability remain. Therefore, more intensive awareness campaigns, educator training and improved school facilities are needed. In conclusion, strong and sustained cross-sectoral support is essential to establish an ecosystem that is able to support the optimal potential of children with disabilities.

#### **AUTHORS' NOTE**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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