

## Special Education Studies for Early Childhood in Several Countries

Ajeng Leksana Mulia, Herry Widyastono

Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta  
Email: ajengmulialeksana@gmail.com

**Abstract:** This article discusses the comparison of early childhood special education in several countries such as South Korea, England, Japan, Malaysia and Indonesia. This article describes early childhood education programs especially for children with special needs. The article aims to explain the similarities and differences that exist in several countries regarding early childhood education. Each country has the same facilities and programs for children with special needs early by providing a learning conditional play program for children under 6 years.

**Keyword:** Special Education, Early Childhood, Special Needs Children

### INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is an education for children before entering elementary school education. This educational program is intended for children under 6 years of age. According to Purnamasari (2013), early childhood education is a form of education that focuses on laying the groundwork for physical growth and development, the intellectual power of thought, emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, socio-emotional, language, and communication, according to the uniqueness and stage of development. The stages of development that early childhood goes through.

Education carried out in early childhood is an effort to facilitate the overall development of the child or emphasize the development of all aspects of the child's personality. Early childhood development is an increase in children's awareness and ability to know themselves and interact with their environment along with the physical growth they experience. Education for early childhood is a bridge so that the child's development process does not experience obstacles or obstacles during its development which is very necessary for capital to interact with the environment.

Education for early childhood (PAUD) uses more playing and singing methods in the learning process. Playgroup is one form of early childhood education through non-formal education that provides educational services for children aged 2-6 years, to help growth and development so that they are ready to enter further education. Early childhood education prioritizes play while learning activities. Playgroups are a place to develop children's creativity in an exciting activity (Ridho, Markhamah, and Darsinah, 2015).

Hadi (2008) said about the concept of playing while learning such as "the concept of playing while learning and learning while playing in PAUD is the foundation that directs children to develop more diverse abilities. District government policies will determine the fate of children and the quality of children in the future.

A quality future does not come suddenly. Therefore, through PAUD we build a strong foundation so that in the future children can stand strong and become quality human figures.

Early childhood education is not only for regular children but also for children with special needs. Because children with special needs also have the right to education like other children. Education for children with special needs is important because it can be the beginning of learning for children with special needs before they enter a higher school environment.

### METHOD

This study uses the literacy review method. The purpose of the study is to describe the similarities and differences in early childhood education programs for children with special needs. Another term for review literacy is literature study, literature study, literature study, theoretical basis, literature study, and theoretical description of the data needed in research that can be obtained from publications, sources, or documents (Randolph, 2009). The author examines Early Childhood Education programs in 5 countries, including South Korea, England, Japan, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### Findings

The study of early childhood education programs, especially for children with special needs in various countries such as South Korea, England, Japan, Malaysia, and Indonesia, will be explained as follows.

#### *Early Childhood Education for Students with Special Needs in South Korea*

Early childhood special education for children with special needs is stated in the Special Education

Promotion Act that education for children with special needs is free of charge or free. Special education schools implement a curriculum that focuses on the education of children with special needs with visual and hearing impairments, mental and emotional retardation, and physical disabilities.

Eleven schools for children with special needs that specifically run kindergarten programs in South Korea with one public school and ten private schools, which have 310 children and 86 teachers. Of these, ten schools focused on mentally retarded children, while one school focused on deaf children. 49 national/state schools in the country allow children with special needs to enroll. These schools provide special education that integrates early childhood, elementary, junior, and senior high school students. There are 87 integrated level private schools with 1,410 students and 274 teachers. There are also 66 regular kindergartens in which 340 children with special needs receive education from 77 teachers, bringing a total of 2,060 children receiving special education (Na & Moon, 2003).

#### *Early Childhood Education for Students with Special Needs in England*

Education for early childhood is regulated by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Government-funded early education for children aged 3 and 4 is provided at nursery schools and nursery classes in government-run primary schools and academies. In addition, a place for early childhood education service providers is also available in private and voluntary managed childcare centers (sometimes known as Sure Start Children's Centers), such as daycare, playgroups, and registered babysitters, supported by government funds subject to certain conditions.

The role of the special education needs coordinator (SENCO) in early childhood education and care is to ensure that all practitioners in the environment understand their responsibilities towards children with special educational needs (SEN), and the regulatory approach to identifying and meeting NES, advising and support colleagues, ensure parents are closely involved and that program arrangements take into account the characteristics of children with special needs, and maintain relationships with professionals or institutions outside of school.

Under the 2014 Children and Families Act, managed daycare schools must ensure that there are qualified teachers designated as SENCO. Voluntary and private early years providers receiving government funding are also expected to have arrangements to meet children's educational needs which may involve identifying SENCO (Early Childhood Education and Care, 2019).

#### *Early Childhood Education for Students with Special Needs in Japan*

Early childhood education in Japan was first established in 1876 as a kindergarten affiliated with Tokyo Woman Normal School (now Ochanomizu University) was then developed with the peculiarities of his Japanese, for example by incorporating the concept of self-reliance through paper folding art of origami, and also physical activity such as rhythmic gymnastics, motor training in daily life. Early childhood education in Japan consists of two forms, namely hoikuen (childcare) and youchien (kindergarten). Children who are accepted in hoikuen are aged 0-3 years, while children who are sent to school in youchien are aged 4-5 years. These two institutions are managed by the city government, as well as private institutions, and are under the responsibility of different Ministries. Kindergarten is under the coordination of the Ministry of Education, while Day Nursery is under the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

In 2006, the government introduced ECEC (Early Childhood Care and Education) or in Japanese called "nintei kodomoen" which was adopted from UNESCO. These institutions provide daycare, kindergartens, children's centers, community centers, or playparks. Thus there are 3 forms of PAUD, namely TK, Day Nursery, and ECEC. The basis of all early childhood education activities is the physical or motor training of children. This concept is used as the basis because from a healthy body a healthy heart/soul and mind will be born. It has been researched for years how the influence of children's physical activities on social behavior and intelligence. That physical exercise that relies on the activation of the soles of the feet and hands will support children's intelligence (Ramli, 2015).

#### *Early Childhood Education for Students with Special Needs in Malaysia*

Fakhri, et al (2018) explain that special education for early childhood in Malaysia is referred to as a preschool program. The preschool program is implemented for children with special needs who are less than 5 years old. This program aims to prepare and train children with special needs to master their potential and minimize problems that will be faced by children when entering basic education. The preschool program is a program organized by the Malaysian Ministry of Education in 2004. Initially, this program was only available in Extraordinary Schools, but in 2005, preschool programs began to be held in integrated schools.

According to Nordin and Hajazi (2019), education for preschool-age children in Malaysia is generally divided into two. The education system for children of preschool age is carried out at the Kindergarten (Taska) and Kindergarten (Tadika). Taska is intended as a place to nurture and look after children aged zero to four

years. Meanwhile, children aged four to six years are educated at *Tadika*. Both use an integrated curriculum that is used in state education programs.

#### *Early Childhood Education for Students with Special Needs in Indonesia*

The development of early childhood education institutions in Indonesia has increased very rapidly in the last decade until the end of 2011. The existence of these institutions has not only appeared in downtown areas but has also penetrated rural areas. One of the early childhood education institutions is kindergarten as an institution of formal and non-formal early childhood institutions get greater scrutiny of Indonesian society. This condition is followed by the great interest and attention of the community with various educational backgrounds towards preschool educational institutions, especially Kindergartens. These indicators show parents' awareness of the importance of providing early stimulation to help the growth and development of various potentials of children (Hapidin, 2003).

Early childhood with special educational needs requires special education programs that are appropriate for their age. Special education programs are therefore designed to meet the unique needs of learners. The difference in potential describes the individual figure of these students. Along with the development of studies regarding the best educational services for children with special needs, three learning settings are considered appropriate for them. The settings are segregation, integration, and inclusion (Tirtayani, 2017).

## **Discussion**

Early childhood education in each country is different. This is based on policies made by the governments of each country. In some countries, early childhood education programs for children with special needs are already very good. This can be seen from the number of schools built to be a place for children with special needs at an early age to develop their potential. In various countries that have been recognized, there are several models of the same principle, namely the availability of education for children with special needs at an early age. Education for early childhood needs to be provided because it is a place to play while learning where children with special needs at an early age can stimulate their abilities.

In South Korea, schools for children with special needs at an early age are free of charge due to funding from the central government. children with special needs are free of charge or free. Special schools implement a curriculum that focuses on children's education according to their needs. Similar to South Korea, which provides free education for children with

special needs, the UK also has programs established to handle early childhood for both regular and special needs children such as daycare, playgroups and registered childcare, supported by government funds.

Japan is not inferior to other developed countries that provide special rights for people with disabilities. This is done by the Japanese government so that all its citizens can access facilities according to their needs. One of the early childhood education programs with special needs in Japan is ECEC (Early Childhood Care and Education) or in Japanese called "nintei kodomoen" which was adopted from UNESCO. These institutions provide daycare, kindergartens, children's centers, community centers, or playparks. Thus there are 3 forms of PAUD including Kindergarten, Day Nursery, and ECEC.

Early childhood education in Malaysia is divided into two, namely *Taska* and *Tadika*. Children with special needs who attend the *Taska* and *Tadika* groups are still united with other normal children in the same class. In addition, there is also a special room for these children with various tools provided to make them special. Although in the teaching process they are united with normal children, they are handled by special teachers. In Indonesia, these two educational models can be categorized into Kindergarten and PAUD. The thing that distinguishes *Taska* and *Tadika* apart from the age group and the curriculum used, can also be seen in the learning activities. *Taska* is more focused on games and daily activities, while *Tadika* begins to focus on the cognitive aspects of his learning activities, such as the introduction of early mathematics and language learning to *Tadika*.

Children with special needs will inspire that humans are born as special beings. They should be given good treatment as needed to get better. Although in the teaching process they are united with normal children, they are handled by special teachers. Each class is equipped with a daily logbook containing activities carried out by children and notes from the teacher. Every day, the notes are given to parents, so they can give the same attention to the child at home (Fakhri, et al, 2018).

The education of children with special needs at an early age is divided into two, namely Kindergarten and Playgroups. In several areas in Indonesia, special schools have been built, in which there is a Kindergarten program which is intended for children with special needs. In addition to special schools, there are also public schools that accept children with special needs/inclusive schools. The principle of kindergarten that accepts children with special needs as students is with the hope that children with special needs can play and learn with regular children. Furthermore, Tirtayani (2017) explained that inclusive education implies the existence of the same learning setting between children with special needs and other children. Inclusiveness

is not only about learning in the same class, but also requires equal ‘opportunities’ in learning. Accordingly, when children with special needs study in regular classes, it does not necessarily indicate the existence of inclusive education at the institution. Therefore, inclusive education can be a means for children with special needs of Kindergarten age to get the same education.

## CONCLUSIONS

South Korea, England, Japan, Malaysia, and Indonesia have provided educational programs that are suitable for children with special needs at an early age. Special schools and inclusive schools aim to enable early childhood children to develop their potential. The strategy is through playing and learning according to the stages of development in the institution or school.

## REFERENCES

- Na, J. & Moon, M. (2003). *Early Childhood Education and Care Policies in the Republic of Korea*. Seoul: Korean Educational Development Institute, Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development.
- Hapidin. (2003). *Manajemen Penyelenggaraan Lembaga Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*. Jakarta: PUSDANI Press.
- Fakhri. (2018). Kurikulum Malaysia. Diakses pada hari Rabu 29 November 2019 dari laman [https://www.academia.edu/36132057/Kurikulum\\_malaysia](https://www.academia.edu/36132057/Kurikulum_malaysia)
- Ramli, M. (2015) Prinsip Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini di Jepang. Diakses pada tanggal 1 November 2019 pada pukul 20.00 pada laman <https://murniramli.wordpress.com/2015/01/12/prinsip-pendidikan-anak-usia-dini-di-jepang-makalah/>
- Randolph, J. (2009). A guide to writing the dissertation literature review. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation, 14*(1), 13.
- Tirtayani, L. A. (2017). Upaya Pendampingan Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus Pada Lembaga-Lembaga PAUD Di Singaraja, Bali. Diakses pada tanggal 29 November 2019 pada pukul 13.05 pada laman <https://jurnal.unissula.ac.id/index.php/proyeksi/article/download>
- Purnamasari, W. W. (2013). Studi Perbandingan Pengembangan Layanan PAUD di Kecamatan Bulakamba Kabupaten Brebes. Diakses pada hari Senin, 30 Desember 2019 pukul 13.00 pada laman <https://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/ijeces/article/view>
- Ridho, Markhamah, dan Darsinah. (2015). Pengelolaan Pembelajaran Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD) Di KB “Cerdas” Kecamatan Sukorejo Kabupaten Kendal. Diakses pada hari Senin, 30 Desember 2019 pukul 13.54 pada laman [journals.ums.ac.id/index.php/humaniora/article/download](http://journals.ums.ac.id/index.php/humaniora/article/download)
- Na, J., & Moon, M. (2003). Integrating Policies and Systems for Early Childhood Education and Care: The Case of the Republic of Korea. *Early Childhood and Family Policy Series*.
- Nordin & Hajazi. (2019). Pendidikan anak usia dini dan Pendidikan awal kanak-kanak. Diakses pada hari Jumat 29 November 2019 dari laman <https://icge.unespadang.ac.id/asset/file/files/36.%20Norazly%20Nordin.pdf>