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## Implementation of Child-Friendly Inclusive Education Policy in Pekanbaru Public Elementary Schools

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Child-Friendly Inclusive Education Policy in Pekanbaru Public Elementary Schools, identifying how the policy is implemented in the process of admitting students with special needs, curriculum implementation, provision of child-friendly facilities and infrastructure, and the roles of the government, school committees, community organizations, and professionals. This study also aims to explore the supporting factors and obstacles that arise in the implementation of the policy, and assess the extent to which the policy has an impact on educational services for students with special needs (PDBK). This research uses a qualitative approach with a policy research method (policy research). Data were collected through in-depth interviews with school principals, class teachers, special assistant teachers (GPK), the Head of the Curriculum Section of the Education Office, and PDBK parents. In addition, this study also utilized field observations and documentation studies of regulations, implementation guidelines, curricula, and school administrative documents regarding the implementation of inclusion. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to determine the alignment between policies, implementation in the field, and the results achieved. The findings of this study are expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of implementing child-friendly inclusive education policies in Pekanbaru Public Elementary Schools and produce recommendations for strengthening the program, both for schools and local governments.

## 1. Introduction

Inclusive schools play an important role in realizing children's rights to equal opportunities in education without discrimination, including for children with special needs. A total of 32,000 schools in Indonesia (based on data from the Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education, Ministry of Education and

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Culture) have been designated by the government, in this case the Education Office, to provide inclusive education, but many are still not in line with the underlying concept (Suvita, 2022). This is supported by findings that the most pressing issue in education is student achievement, especially in relation to the declining quality of graduates (Purnomo, 2019). This condition has the potential to affect the quality of educational services and may increase the risk of discrimination against children with special needs (Tarnoto, 2016). As stated by Wardah (2019), the role of special guidance teachers is still not optimal due to their lack of experience. In addition, minimal support from the government and society also affects the quality of inclusive education (Mareza, 2018). Most inclusive schools in Indonesia still face problems related to physical facilities that are not friendly to children with special needs (Meka, 2023). This lack of pedagogical competence is also due to the fact that teachers rarely attend seminars or workshops that can improve the pedagogical competence of inclusive school teachers (Wulandari, 2021).

Implementation is the application of ideas, concepts, policies, or innovations in practical actions that have an impact, whether in the form of changes in knowledge, skills, values, or attitudes (Haji, 2020). Implementation is usually carried out after planning is considered complete (Nugroho, 2014). The execution or implementation of a policy or program is a series of more or less related choices (including decisions to act) made by government agencies and officials formulated in areas such as health, social welfare, economics, administration, and others (Dunn, 2017). To optimize the use of a classroom, good management is required (Pakpahan, et al., 2024).

A policy is a series of alternatives that are ready to be selected based on certain principles (Budi, 2008). In line with this, the term policy is generally used to refer to the behavior of an actor or a number of actors in a particular field of activity (Winarno, 2002). Thus, something produced by the government originates from all events in society and is also used for the benefit of society. Second, policy is an event that is created either to reconcile the claims of conflicting parties or to create incentives for joint action for parties who contribute to the creation of goals but receive irrational treatment in the joint effort (Thoha, 2003). Policy can be defined as a series of program plans, activities, actions, decisions, attitudes, to act or not to act, carried out by parties (policy actors), as stages for resolving various problems encountered (Iskandar, 2012). In calculating the correlation between parental attitudes and independence in children, there is a strong or high relationship, and hypothesis testing proves that parental attitudes have a positive relationship with independence in children (Qistia, et al., 2019).

Inclusive education means that schools must accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social-emotional, linguistic, or other conditions. Inclusive education involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures, and strategies that can accommodate the needs of all children according to their age group (Alimin, 2005). All students learn together, both in formal and non-formal classes/schools located in their place of residence, which are adapted to the conditions and needs of each student (Kustawan, 2016).

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The term “child-friendly” began to be used after the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the United Nations, which was then ratified by almost all UN members in 1989. A Child-Friendly School is a concept of an open school that strives to apply learning that pays attention to the psychological development of its students. It develops learning habits in accordance with the natural and psychological conditions of children. In addition, child-friendly schools do not pressure, coerce, or intimidate children so that they have the freedom to choose to learn and develop their potential happily and cheerfully (Yulianto, 2016). Child-Friendly Schools are sustainable and are expected to have a chain of positive effects. Sudirjo (2016) outlines the characteristics of child-friendly schools, including Attitude towards Students, Learning Methods, Classroom Arrangement, and Healthy Environment. Sakti (2016) states that the indicators of a child-friendly school can be explained in accordance with the 2014 Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection's Child-Friendly School Development Policy.

Children with special needs are children who grow and develop differently from other children. Based on the description of various types of special needs, it can be concluded that each group of children has different characteristics, obstacles, and educational service needs. Blind children experience visual impairment, so they need learning support through Braille, the use of their sense of touch, and mobility orientation training. The achievement of a child's development in line with expectations cannot be separated from the role of parents who are always there when their children need them (Turnip, et al., 2019). Winarsih, (2007) Deaf children face hearing barriers that impact communication and language development, requiring a Total Communication approach, the use of sign language, and teaching with clear articulation. Children with intellectual disabilities have limited intelligence that affects their academic abilities and independence, so learning must be tailored to their abilities, either through simple academic exercises or self-development.

Children with physical disabilities face motor function impairments but generally have normal intelligence. They require adjustments to learning activities, social-emotional development support, and skills training to utilize their remaining motor abilities. Children with behavioral disorders experience behavioral, social, and emotional disorders, requiring counseling, rehabilitation, and behavioral conditioning in accordance with social norms. Children with autism have communication and social interaction barriers characterized by repetitive behaviors, requiring intensive behavioral intervention. (Mahastuti, 2011) Slow learners demonstrate slower learning abilities and require gradual learning and repetition. Meanwhile, Sulistyarini (2020) states that children with Down syndrome have genetic disorders that affect their physical and cognitive development, requiring concrete learning and motor support. Children with ADHD have difficulty focusing and exhibit impulsive behavior, requiring structured and varied learning strategies.

Based on this, this study focuses on the implementation policy of child-friendly inclusive education at SD Negeri Pekanbaru, which aims to produce policy recommendations or alternative policy recommendations regarding the implementation of child-friendly inclusive education at SD Negeri Pekanbaru.

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## **2. Methodology**

The approach used in this study adopts a qualitative approach with a policy research method. Referring to the definition of qualitative approach put forward by Sugiyono (2013), according to Sujarweni (2015), policy research is research conducted by analyzing fundamental social issues to collect comprehensive information and is intended for policy formulation. This policy research is structured based on the policy research approach that refers to the McMillan (2010) model, and policy analysis according to Nugroho (2014).

These three approaches emphasize that policy research needs to be analyzed through several key indicators, namely policy accuracy, implementation accuracy, target accuracy, environmental accuracy, and process accuracy. Based on this framework, this study focuses on the implementation of child-friendly inclusive education policies in public schools in Pekanbaru City, particularly at SD Negeri 117 Pekanbaru. This focus was chosen to produce policy recommendations and policy alternatives that are relevant, strategic, and in line with field needs. The research was conducted because the implementation of inclusive education cannot be measured quantitatively, thus requiring in-depth exploration that describes empirical conditions through words, behaviors, documents, and phenomena occurring in schools.

The data collected consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data included school documents such as decrees establishing inclusive schools, curricula, syllabi, student progress records, external cooperation reports, and observations of facilities and learning processes. Primary data was also obtained through interviews with various stakeholders. Meanwhile, secondary data comes from government reports, central and regional policies, previous research, and other documents relevant to the research theme. Combining these two data sources helps researchers interpret the policy context more comprehensively.

In collecting data, the researchers used three main techniques, namely observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews. Observations were conducted directly to record various practices of inclusive education, such as the student admission process, student needs assessment, implementation of differentiated learning, availability of child-friendly facilities, and special service support. Documentation was used as empirical evidence of policy and implementation in schools. Meanwhile, in-depth interviews were conducted with the Education Office, school principals, GPK, and parents to explore their experiences, perceptions, and challenges in implementing inclusive education.

The data obtained was analyzed using Miles (1992) model, which includes data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. In the data collection stage, all observations, interviews, and documentation were collected in field notes. The reduction stage was carried out to select and simplify the information so that only relevant data was used. The data was then organized in a systematic presentation to facilitate interpretation. The final stage was data verification, which involved retesting the findings to discover deeper

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meanings, patterns of relationships, and accountable conclusions, as shown in Figure 1.

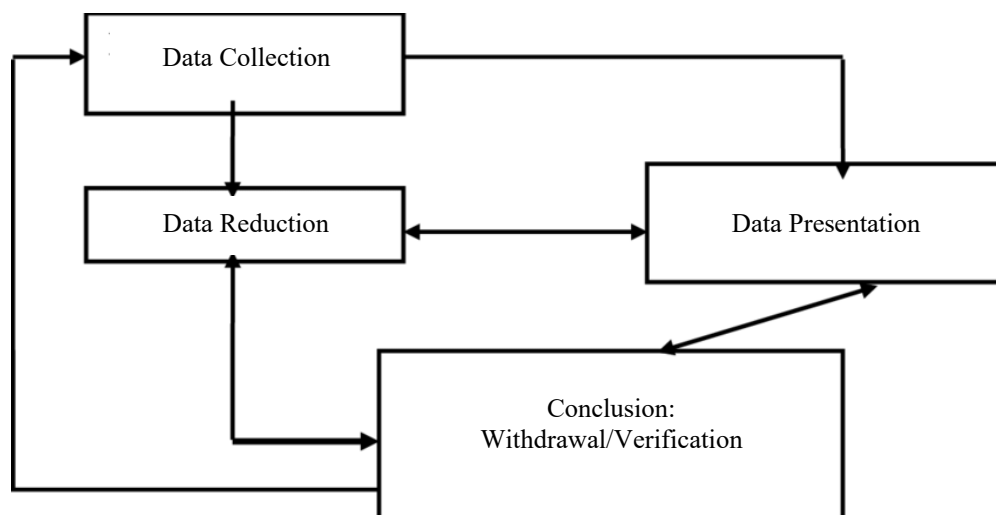


Figure 1. Components in data analysis (interactive model)

To ensure data validity, this study used several credibility testing techniques, namely extended observation, increased persistence, source triangulation, technique triangulation, time triangulation, negative case analysis, use of reference materials, and member check. All of these techniques aim to ensure that the data obtained truly reflects the reality in the field and is reliable. Triangulation is carried out by comparing data from various informants, techniques, and times so that the findings are valid and objective. Member checks are used to ensure that the information recorded by the researcher is in accordance with the informant's intentions.

The research procedure follows three main stages: the orientation stage, the reduction stage, and the selection stage. In the orientation stage, researchers recognize the field situation and identify problems. The reduction stage is carried out to focus the research on specific relevant issues. The selection stage is a stage of in-depth analysis of the research focus to obtain important findings and conclusions. These three stages are combined with seven research steps, namely problem identification, problem limitation, focus setting, research implementation, data interpretation, theory emergence, and research result reporting. This combination ensures that the research is carried out systematically, structurally, and in accordance with methodological principles. Research instruments are designed to guide researchers in collecting data through interviews, observation, and documentation. In qualitative research, researchers are the main instruments directly involved in the entire process of data collection and analysis. Therefore, researchers must understand the context of inclusion policies, have good observation skills, and be able to conduct ethical and in-depth interviews.

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### 3. Result and Discussion

#### *Admission Process for Students at Child-Friendly Inclusive Schools*

Based on a series of interviews with the Principal, Special Assistant Teachers (GPK), Head of the Elementary School Curriculum Section of Pekanbaru City, and parents of students with special needs at SDN 117 Pekanbaru, it can be concluded that the admission process for students with special needs has been carried out in accordance with the principles of inclusiveness, non-discrimination, and child-friendliness. The principal demonstrated a strong commitment to implementing the PDBK admission policy based on the Ministry of Education's guidelines. M.W emphasized, "We treat every child who enrolls equally without discrimination... we strive to make this school an inclusive and friendly place for all children." This illustrates that the school not only follows regulations but also applies a humanistic and collaborative approach.

The initial identification process is carried out from the time of registration through interviews, assessment documents, and observation of the child's behavior. M.W. said, "We, together with special assistant teachers, try to classify the types of needs of children... as a basis for determining services and learning strategies." This information ensures that each PDBK receives the appropriate intervention. Furthermore, Special Guidance Teachers (GPK) reinforce these findings by explaining their active role in initial assessments and the development of individual programs. N.W. said, "Since registration, I have helped with identification... the results become a reference for learning strategies and class placement." This confirms the harmonious collaboration between GPK, regular teachers, and the principal. From a regulatory perspective, the Pekanbaru City Education Office provides a regulatory framework through the SPMB Technical Guidelines. J.K. said, "Schools cannot reject children simply because they have special needs... the most important thing is that schools conduct initial assessments." This regulation reinforces inclusive practices in schools.

The parents' perception shows that the implementation of the policy is truly felt to be positive. The parents stated, "I feel very appreciated as a parent... the school did not reject my child, but instead looked for ways for my child to learn comfortably." This proves that SDN 117 has built an open and supportive school culture. Overall, SDN 117 Pekanbaru has successfully implemented inclusive schooling through a transparent admission process, comprehensive assessments, cooperation between parties, and respect for every child's right to a proper education. This implementation demonstrates the school's success in creating an inclusive, child-friendly environment that is oriented towards the needs of students.

#### *Child-Friendly Inclusive School Curriculum*

Based on interviews with the Principal of SDN 117 Pekanbaru, Special Assistant Teachers (GPK), the Head of the Elementary School Curriculum Section of Pekanbaru City, and the parents of students with special needs, it can be concluded that the implementation of the curriculum at SDN 117 Pekanbaru reflects the

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principles of inclusive education that is adaptive, flexible, and oriented towards the needs of each student with special needs. First, the Merdeka Curriculum is still used as the main basis, but its implementation is modified according to the abilities and characteristics of the students. The principal, M.W., emphasized that, “We continue to use the Merdeka Curriculum, but in its implementation, we make adjustments to accommodate the needs of children with special needs... teachers do not demand the same achievements as regular students.” This statement shows flexibility in the implementation of the curriculum. GPK reinforced this finding by explaining that curriculum adjustments are made based on individual assessment results. N.W stated, “We make adjustments based on assessment results... usually, I work with the classroom teacher to create an Individual Learning Program (PPI) that contains specific learning targets for each child.” These adjustments cover academics, independence, and social skills.

In terms of policy, the Education Office emphasizes that inclusive schools have the discretion to modify the curriculum as long as it remains within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum. J.K. said, “The curriculum is modified to suit the abilities and needs of each child... schools have the freedom to make adjustments as long as they adhere to inclusive education.” Furthermore, parents expressed their satisfaction with the implementation of the adaptive curriculum. He said, “Teachers and GPK adjust learning according to the children's abilities... learning activities are made simpler and more interesting.” This shows that the school has been able to provide personalized and needs-based educational services.

Overall, these findings confirm that SDN 117 Pekanbaru has implemented an inclusive curriculum that is responsive to the needs of PDBK through modifications to learning objectives, methods, media, and assessment. The adjustments made are in line with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum and inclusive education practices. However, as Wardah (2019) mentioned, the role of GPK still needs to be strengthened, and the analysis results show that subtle forms of discrimination such as antilocution and avoidance can still occur in the school environment (Ramadhani, 2025). These findings indicate the need to improve teacher competence, school community understanding, and strengthen an inclusive culture as a whole.

### ***The Role of the Government, Community Organizations, School Committees, and Professionals***

Based on interviews with various parties involved in the implementation of inclusive education at SDN 117 Pekanbaru namely the Principal, Special Assistant Teachers (GPK), the Head of the Elementary School Curriculum Section of Pekanbaru City, and the parents of students with special needs it can be concluded that the success of inclusive education in this school is highly dependent on strong and continuous collaboration between stakeholders. First, the government has a central role as a provider of policies, assistance, and facilities for inclusive schools. The principal, M.W., emphasized that, “The government plays a very big role... we receive guidance, training, and assistance from the Education Office... The government also helps in providing special assistant teachers and basic child-

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friendly infrastructure.” This shows that there is structural support that forms the foundation for the implementation of inclusion.

Collaboration with professionals such as psychologists and therapists is very helpful in the assessment and intervention process. GPK N.W. said, “We often consult with psychologists and therapists... collaboration with them makes the services at school more targeted.” This process ensures that the needs of each PDBK can be addressed more comprehensively. The local government, through the Education Office, also acts as a facilitator in policy implementation. J.K. stated that, “We ensure that every inclusive school receives guidelines, technical guidance, and supervision... and we work with professionals to train teachers.” This confirms that support is not only administrative but also technical. Furthermore, from the perspective of parents, the support from the government and schools is felt to be real. Mrs. I said, “I feel that this school is open and supported by the government... the school also works with psychologists or therapists to assess children's development.” This reflects that communication and school services are positively received by parents.

Overall, the implementation of inclusive education at SDN 117 Pekanbaru is effective thanks to the synergy between the government, community institutions, school committees, professionals, and parents. The government provides guidelines, training, and supervision; community organizations provide social support; the school committee bridges communication; while professionals strengthen assessment and assistance. This synergy enables schools to create an inclusive, child-friendly learning environment that is responsive to the needs of students with special needs. However, the literature shows that government and community support still needs to be improved. Putro (2023) emphasizes the importance of greater support from the government as part of the national development agenda. On the other hand, Dewi (2024) reminds us that social stigma and bullying are still obstacles that affect the mental and emotional health of students with special needs. These findings indicate the need to strengthen policies, raise public awareness, and expand collaboration so that inclusive education can run more optimally.

## ***Discussion***

### ***Admission Process for Students at Child-Friendly Inclusive Schools***

The admission process for students with special needs (PDBK) at SDN 117 Pekanbaru reflects the application of the principles of inclusion and child-friendly schools. Based on an interview with the principal, M.W., the admission process always adheres to the Ministry of Education's regulations that emphasize non-discriminatory treatment. M.W. stated that all children are accepted without exception, but an initial assessment process is still carried out to ensure that educational services are tailored to individual needs. This approach is in line with the principle of a child-friendly school, which places respect for the dignity and rights of children at the core of education.

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The admission process is carried out in collaboration with the Education Office, Special Assistance Teachers (GPK), experts, and parents. Needs are identified during registration through interviews, the collection of assessment documents (psychologist or doctor's letters), and simple observations of the child's behavior and communication skills. This information is then classified together with the GPK into categories of mild, moderate, or severe needs as the basis for developing learning strategies and Individual Learning Programs (PPI). Information from N.W. as the GPK reinforces this procedure. He explained that initial identification is an important step in determining student placement and adjusting learning interventions. This shows that admission is not merely administrative, but based on assessment and needs mapping. From the government's perspective, the Head of the Elementary School Curriculum Section of Pekanbaru City, J.K., emphasized that schools cannot reject PDBK in accordance with the SPMB Technical Guidelines and Permendiknas No. 70 of 2009 concerning Inclusive Education. This regulation affirms the principle of non-discrimination as stated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The parents' perspective also shows that the admission process is open and friendly, so that parents feel valued and supported. Overall, the PDBK admission process at SDN 117 Pekanbaru consists of three stages: (1) open and non-discriminatory admission, (2) identification of needs through initial assessment, and (3) classification of needs as a basis for intervention. This practice illustrates the implementation of responsive inclusive education in accordance with assessment standards in special education.

### ***Child-Friendly Inclusive School Curriculum***

The implementation of the curriculum at SDN 117 Pekanbaru shows strong flexibility in accommodating the needs of students with special needs (PDBK). The principal, M.W., explained that the school continues to refer to the Merdeka Curriculum, but its implementation is modified to suit the abilities and characteristics of the students. Adjustments are made to learning objectives, teaching methods, media, and assessment systems. Teachers do not demand the same achievements from regular students and PDBK, but rather align achievements with individual potential and development. Special Assistant Teacher (GPK), N.W., added that curriculum adjustments are realized through the development of Individual Learning Programs (PPI) based on initial assessments and behavioral observations. PPI contains specific learning targets, such as developing independence, social skills, or basic academic skills. This reflects a personalized learning approach in line with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

The view of the Head of the Elementary School Curriculum Section of Pekanbaru City, J.K., shows that the Education Office provides flexibility for schools to modify the curriculum as long as it remains in accordance with the principles of inclusion. This confirms the existence of structural support for learning differentiation. However, the results of Wardah's (2019) research show that the competence of GPK is often not optimal, so capacity building is needed. Ramadhani (2025) also identified forms of covert discrimination at the antilocution and avoidance stages, such as subtle social exclusion and unconscious labeling. The

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perspective of parents shows that curriculum adjustments are actually implemented in practice. Teachers and GPK prepare simpler and more interesting learning activities so that PDBK can participate in learning without pressure. This shows the consistency of the implementation of a child-friendly curriculum in everyday learning. In general, the curriculum at SDN 117 Pekanbaru is implemented adaptively through modifications to learning outcomes, differentiation of methods, and the use of PPI. This approach ensures that every child has equal access to learning in an inclusive environment.

### ***The Role of the Government, Community Organizations, School Committees, and Professionals***

Inclusive education at SDN 117 Pekanbaru is carried out through strong collaboration between the government, community institutions, school committees, and professionals. From the interviews, the government through the Education Office is the main factor that provides policy direction, training, assistance, and supervision for PDBK management. The principal, M.W., mentioned that government support includes the provision of GPK, technical guidelines, and basic child-friendly facilities. This statement was reinforced by J.K., who emphasized that the local government collaborates with psychologists, SLB, and universities for teacher assessment and training. This is in line with Putro (2023) findings regarding the importance of government support in strengthening inclusive education. Apart from the government, community institutions act as school partners in training, mentoring, and social activities relevant to children's needs. However, Dewi (2024) noted that the lack of community support and social stigma such as discrimination and bullying are still challenges, which can have a negative impact on the emotional condition of children with special needs.

The school committee also contributes to supporting the implementation of inclusive education through moral support and simple facilities, such as the provision of learning aids. The committee acts as a liaison between the school and parents so that collaboration runs harmoniously. The involvement of professionals such as psychologists and therapists is an important part of student assessment and mentoring. GPK, N.W., states that collaboration with professionals is very helpful in determining the right intervention strategy. Parents also feel the benefits of professional involvement in monitoring their children's development. Overall, the roles of the government, community institutions, school committees, and professionals form a collaborative framework that enables SDN 117 Pekanbaru to provide comprehensive inclusive services. The synergy of these four elements creates a safe, supportive, and child-friendly learning environment, enabling PDBK to receive optimal educational services.

## **4. Conclusion**

Based on the results of research on the Implementation of Inclusive and Child-Friendly Schools at SD Negeri 117 Pekanbaru, it can be concluded that this school has made efforts to apply the principle of inclusivity well through various aspects

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of education. The process of accepting students with special needs (PDBK) is carried out in accordance with the guidelines from the Ministry of Education and the Pekanbaru City Education Office. The school conducts initial identification, simple assessments, and works with special assistant teachers and parents to determine the appropriate services for each child. The curriculum used accommodates the needs of students with special needs through adjustments to the material, methods, and learning evaluation. Teachers are assisted by GPK in adapting the curriculum so that each child can learn according to their abilities and potential. The roles of the government, community institutions, school committees, and professionals are synergistic. The government provides policies, training, and supervision; community institutions play a role in education and social support; school committees assist in communication and facility support; while professionals such as psychologists and therapists support the assessment and intervention process for children. In general, SDN 117 Pekanbaru has demonstrated its commitment to creating an inclusive and child-friendly learning environment, marked by non-discriminatory acceptance, cross-party collaboration, and efforts to improve teacher competence in serving a diverse student body.

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