



Parental Parenting Patterns Toward Children with Disabilities in the Inclusive School Raudhatul Athfal Ulumul Quran Al Madani Banjarbaru

Hanifa Muthaharah*, Hermanto, Anisa Sri Rizky, Cindy Rahmi Aulia, Monika Nur Edlina

Faculty of Education, Yogyakarta State University Special Region of Yogyakarta, 55281, Indonesia

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* Corresponding author:

E-mail: hanifa.mutha@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Parenting children with disabilities requires adaptive strategies that address their unique developmental and emotional needs. However, variations in parenting practices are often overlooked, particularly in understanding how core parenting dimensions are applied in real contexts. This study aims to provide an in-depth description of parenting styles and their key aspects warmth, control, and communication among parents of children with disabilities. This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive multiple case study design. Informants were selected purposively, consisting of four parents of children with disabilities, one special education teacher, and one individual from the parents' social environment. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, and analyzed through cross-case comparison. The findings indicate that parenting practices generally reflect a democratic pattern. However, the implementation of warmth, control, and communication varies across cases and is adapted to the child's specific condition. In addition, parents face several challenges, including limited knowledge and skills, difficulties in supporting children's developmental tasks, and constraints related to the child's condition. In conclusion, parenting in this context is dynamic and context-dependent, highlighting the need for increased parental support and practical guidance.

1. Introduction

The family is the closest and most fundamental support system in a child's life. Parents, as the primary caregivers, play a crucial role in providing protection, affection, and guidance that shape a child's development. Parenting practices applied in everyday life not only influence children's behavior but also determine their ability to grow into independent individuals. In this context, parenting can be understood as a continuous process of nurturing, guiding, and modeling behavior that enables children to develop optimally according to their potential. This role

becomes more complex and significant when parents raise children with disabilities. According to the Regulation of the Minister of Social Affairs Number 13 of 2015, children with disabilities are defined as individuals who experience long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory limitations that, in interaction with environmental and social barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society. These conditions require parents to adopt appropriate parenting approaches that are not only supportive but also adaptive to the specific needs of their children.

The urgency of this issue is reflected in national data. Based on the National Socio-Economic Survey (SUSENAS) conducted by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2018, the number of children with disabilities in Indonesia reached approximately 1.6 million. This figure indicates that children with disabilities represent a significant portion of the population and require serious attention from various stakeholders, including families, educational institutions, and the government. Adequate parenting knowledge and practices are essential to support the development and well-being of these children, both at home and in educational settings.

Inclusive education has been introduced as an effort to provide equal learning opportunities for children with disabilities. Inclusive schools are expected to accommodate the diverse needs of students and create an environment that supports their academic and social development. One example is Raudhatul Athfal (RA) Ulumul Quran Al Madani Banjarbaru, an inclusive early childhood education institution under the Cahaya Keluarga Madani Foundation and the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Banjarbaru City. However, despite the availability of inclusive educational services, challenges remain, particularly in the family environment.

Initial observations conducted by the researcher at RA Ulumul Quran Al Madani indicate that many parents of children with disabilities still have limited understanding of their role in supporting their children's development. This is consistent with findings by Pratiwi & Wahyudi (2019) and Vani et al. (2014), who stated that although inclusive education has been implemented in Indonesia, its effectiveness is often hindered by limited parental knowledge and the lack of a supportive social environment. Parents may not fully understand how to apply appropriate parenting strategies or provide special approaches tailored to their children's conditions. As a result, children with disabilities may face difficulties not only in their development but also in social interactions, including the risk of discrimination and bullying.

Parenting patterns play a vital role in addressing these challenges. Hean (2019) identified three main parenting styles: authoritarian, democratic (authoritative), and permissive. Authoritarian parenting is characterized by strict control and high demands with limited warmth, while democratic parenting emphasizes a balance between control and responsiveness, encouraging independence while maintaining clear boundaries. Permissive parenting, on the other hand, is marked by high acceptance but low control, often resulting in a lack of discipline. These parenting styles influence how children develop emotionally, socially, and behaviorally.

Furthermore, parenting practices can be analyzed through three main aspects: warmth, control, and communication. Warmth refers to emotional closeness and affection between parents and children, control relates to the enforcement of rules and discipline, and communication involves the exchange of information, explanations, and feedback between parents and children (Damon & Lerner, 2006; Dewi et al., 2025). These aspects are particularly important for children with disabilities, as they require not only guidance but also understanding and emotional support to navigate their unique challenges.

Child development itself is a dynamic process influenced by both maturation and environmental experiences. Soetjningsih (2012) emphasized that children with disabilities must not only accept their own conditions but also cope with negative reactions from society. Therefore, they require strong support systems, particularly from their families, to ensure that their rights to grow, develop, and participate in society are fulfilled. Social workers also play an important role in providing professional assistance and interventions aimed at improving the social functioning of children with disabilities (Kamalia et al., 2022; Samiha & Fauzi, 2025). Given these conditions, it is evident that parenting practices are a key factor in supporting the development and well-being of children with disabilities. However, gaps in parental knowledge and practice still exist, particularly in inclusive educational settings such as RA Ulumul Quran Al Madani Banjarbaru. This highlights the need for a deeper understanding of how parenting is applied in real contexts and how it influences children's development.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze and describe the parenting patterns applied by parents of children with disabilities at the inclusive school RA Ulumul Quran Al Madani Banjarbaru, as well as to examine the implementation of parenting aspects namely warmth, control, and communication in supporting the development of children with disabilities. The findings of this study are expected to contribute both theoretically, by enriching the literature on parenting and child social work, and practically, by providing recommendations for parents, educators, and policymakers in improving support systems for children with disabilities.

2. Methodology

Instrument

The instruments used in this study were interview guidelines, observation sheets, and documentation checklists prepared by the researcher prior to data collection. The interview guidelines were designed to explore parents' parenting practices toward children with disabilities, focusing on dimensions of warmth, control, and communication. Observation sheets were used to record parents' interactions and behaviors during direct observation sessions in natural settings. Documentation checklists were utilized to collect supporting documents relevant to the research, including school records, photographs, and field notes. The preparation of these instruments was based on the research objectives and conceptual framework to ensure alignment with the study focus.

Data Collection

Data collection in this study was conducted through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation studies. Primary data were obtained directly from informants through in-depth interviews and observations (Ayuni & Ritonga, 2025; Natasya & Maksum, 2025; Saputra & Hafidz, 2025). The main informants consisted of four parents of children with disabilities enrolled at the inclusive school RA Ulumul Quran Al Madani Banjarbaru. To enrich and validate the findings, complementary informants were also involved, including one neighbor of the main informants and one special assistant teacher from the same school.

The selection of informants was carried out using purposive sampling, where participants were chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. Secondary data were obtained through documentation studies and literature reviews related to the research topic. During the fieldwork process, researchers referred to the instruments and guidelines that had been prepared in advance to maintain consistency and focus throughout the data collection process. To ensure data trustworthiness, this study applied validity testing through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability criteria (Intan et al., 2025; Permadi & Achadi, 2025).

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was conducted through several systematic stages, namely data processing, data categorization, and data interpretation. First, the collected data from interviews, observations, and documentation were organized and processed to facilitate analysis. Second, the data were categorized into thematic groups based on recurring patterns and concepts related to parenting practices among parents of children with disabilities. Third, the categorized data were interpreted by linking the findings to the theoretical framework and previous relevant studies. The analysis process aimed to identify patterns, similarities, and differences across cases in order to understand the implementation of parenting practices within each family context. The analyzed data were then presented descriptively in the findings and discussion sections to provide comprehensive explanations relevant to the theoretical perspective employed in the study.

3. Results and Discussion

Parenting Patterns Across Informants

Based on in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, the findings indicate that parenting practices among parents of children with disabilities at RA Ulumul Quran Al Madani Banjarbaru predominantly reflect a democratic orientation. However, this orientation should not be interpreted as a homogeneous or stable construct. Instead, the empirical data reveal that democratic parenting emerges as a flexible and context-dependent practice, shaped by the child's developmental condition, parental interpretation, and situational demands. As

illustrated in Figure 1, the research setting provides a naturalistic environment in which parent–child interactions are continuously negotiated.



Figure 1. The yard of the RA Ulumul Quran Al Madani Banjarbaru School

Rather than functioning as a rigid framework, democratic parenting operates here as a dynamic process of adjustment. Parents do not merely apply predefined principles; they reinterpret and reconstruct parenting strategies in response to the child’s behavioral, emotional, and cognitive characteristics. This indicates that democratic parenting, within the context of disability, is better understood as a situated practice rather than a normative ideal. To deepen the analysis within this multiple case study, a cross-case comparison was conducted focusing on three key dimensions: warmth, control, and communication. While all dimensions are present across cases, their implementation varies significantly in terms of intensity, strategy, and functional orientation. The comparative results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Parenting Patterns Across Informants

Informant	Child’s Condition	Warmth (Affection)	Control (Discipline)	Communication	Key Characteristics
S	Autism (ASD)	Expresses affection through hugs, praise, and spending time together; responsive to child’s mood	Applies discipline through repetition and modeling; flexible, forceful	Uses simple language, and responds to non-verbal cues	Highly adaptive to child’s mood; emphasizes emotional bonding and gradual learning
L	Global developmental delay, speech delay	Shows affection through physical touch and involvement in daily activities	Applies discipline gradually with close supervision; requires extra effort due to low focus	Combines verbal and non-verbal communication; requires repeated instructions	Focus on stimulating interaction and improving concentration

E	Hearing impairment	Focuses on emotional closeness and consistent presence	Applies structured routines and adjusted child's limitations	Emphasizes verbal training and articulation	Prioritizes clear language development and communication clarity
LS	ADHD	Shows affection through attention and engagement in activities	Applies flexible discipline, and adjusted in child's hyperactivity	Encourages communication to while focus and attention	Focus on improving concentration and behavioral control

Cross-Case Differences and Case-Specific Patterns

Although all informants demonstrate elements of democratic parenting, a deeper cross-case analysis reveals significant variation that challenges the tendency to generalize parenting patterns as uniformly “democratic.” Each case demonstrates a distinct configuration of warmth, control, and communication, indicating that parenting practices are shaped by specific developmental demands rather than a single guiding model. Informant S (autism) places primary emphasis on emotional warmth and non-verbal responsiveness. In this case, warmth functions as a regulatory mechanism that helps stabilize the child’s emotional state. The relatively less structured form of control—implemented through repetition and sensitivity to mood—suggests that rigid discipline may be less effective for children with autism, thereby requiring adaptive and responsive strategies.

In contrast, Informant L (developmental delay) demonstrates a configuration oriented toward cognitive stimulation and guided engagement. Warmth is expressed through shared activities, while control is enacted through structured participation and repetition. Compared to S, this case reflects a shift from emotional regulation toward developmental facilitation, where parenting functions as a medium for enhancing the child’s cognitive and attentional capacities. Meanwhile, Informant E (hearing impairment) shows a distinct prioritization of communication. Unlike other cases where communication is flexible and multimodal, E emphasizes clarity, articulation, and consistency. This indicates that sensory limitations directly reshape parenting strategies, positioning communication not only as interaction but as a central developmental intervention.

Informant LS (ADHD) highlights the dynamic and situational nature of control. Parenting strategies in this case require continuous adjustment due to fluctuating attention and hyperactivity. Control becomes highly responsive and flexible, demonstrating that discipline is not a fixed structure but an adaptive process that responds to behavioral variability. These findings demonstrate that democratic parenting cannot be reduced to a uniform construct. Instead, it emerges as a *contextually differentiated configuration*, where each case reflects a unique balance between warmth, control, and communication. This comparative insight strengthens the analytical depth of the study by moving beyond descriptive generalization toward case-based interpretation.

Warmth (Affection and Emotional Closeness)

The findings show that warmth is consistently present across all cases; however, its manifestation, intensity, and function differ significantly. Empirically, warmth is expressed through both verbal and non-verbal forms, including spontaneous physical affection, emotional responsiveness, and involvement in daily activities. Figure 2 illustrates the interaction between the researcher and Informant S during the interview process.



Figure 2. Interview with Informant S

“Hugs, or not like being loved. Basically, like what I didn’t get from my parents, I give to the kids even though sometimes K’s response is no-no, haha. So, it’s like a sudden hug. Then, suddenly, K can hug me, kiss my cheek. His little brother does the same. Like, I hug, kiss, smile. That’s all I do. The most I say is, ‘Mom loves you, big brother’ or ‘I love you,’ something like that.” (S). This statement indicates that affection is expressed unconditionally, even in the absence of reciprocal responses. Analytically, this suggests that warmth functions not only as emotional expression but also as a strategy to maintain relational stability in the context of limited social responsiveness. This pattern is further supported by observational data in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Interview and Observation with Informant S

The observation shows that warmth is enacted proactively, such as initiating physical closeness and involving the child in interaction without waiting for explicit cues. This reinforces the interpretation that warmth in this case serves as a compensatory mechanism for social-emotional limitations. Similarly, Informant L demonstrates warmth through activity-based engagement Figure 4.



Figure 4. Interview with Informant L

"Just casually, sis, it's like that, I'm invited to do activities like that. Like, for example, if I want to wash, I ask "Come on, A, come with mom and go upstairs to wash, help mom" like that. So especially when we go to A, it's when we're free and empty, sis, then we can fully go to A. But if, for example, we're doing housework, then just invite A." (L). This is reinforced by observational findings in Figure 5, where the parent repeatedly involves the child in daily tasks as a strategy to maintain engagement and reduce inattentiveness.



Figure 5. Interview and Observation with Informant L

The observational findings confirm that repeated involvement in daily activities functions as a strategy to sustain attention and engagement. In contrast to S, where warmth emphasizes emotional bonding, L's approach shows that warmth can also function as cognitive stimulation. Thus, cross-case analysis indicates that warmth

is not merely relational but also functional—serving different developmental purposes depending on the child's condition.

Control (Discipline and Behavioral Guidance)

The findings reveal that control is not implemented through rigid enforcement but through repetition, modeling, and gradual habituation. However, a deeper analysis supported by empirical data shows that the meaning and function of control differ across cases. In the case of Informant S (autism), control is highly situational and responsive to the child's emotional state. As expressed by S:

"If he is in a bad mood, I can't force him. Usually I repeat slowly, like 'let's try again later,' and give an example first. If I push, he gets more upset." (S).

This statement indicates that discipline is constructed through emotional attunement rather than coercion. This is reinforced by observational data, where the parent was seen pausing instructions and shifting to a calmer tone when the child showed resistance, before reintroducing the task gradually. Similarly, Informant LS (ADHD) emphasizes flexibility in behavioral control:

"Sometimes I have to repeat many times. If I'm too strict, he just runs away or loses focus. So I adjust, sometimes firm, sometimes relaxed." (LS).

Observation shows that the parent frequently alternates between directing and redirecting attention, indicating that control operates as a continuous adjustment process rather than a fixed structure. In contrast, Informant L (developmental delay) demonstrates a more structured approach:

"I have to guide step by step, like showing first, then asking him to follow. If not repeated, he forgets." (L).

Observational findings confirm that the parent consistently uses modeling and routine-based repetition, suggesting that control here functions as guided learning. These findings indicate that control within democratic parenting is not a standardized mechanism but an adaptive and interactional process shaped by the child's responsiveness. Discipline is therefore negotiated and reconstructed in practice, rather than imposed as a fixed rule system.

Communication (Interaction and Mutual Understanding)

Communication emerges as a central yet highly adaptive dimension across all cases, supported by both interview and observational data. It functions not only as a medium of interaction but also as a tool for facilitating understanding, regulating behavior, and supporting development. In the case of Informant E (hearing impairment), communication is deliberately structured and goal-oriented. As stated by E:

"I have to speak clearly and slowly, repeating the words so my child can follow. Sometimes I also exaggerate lip movement so it's easier to understand." (E).

Observation shows that the parent consistently maintains eye contact and articulates words with clear mouth movements, indicating that communication serves as a form of developmental intervention. In contrast, Informant S relies heavily on non-verbal and interpretive communication:

"Sometimes he doesn't speak, but I can tell from his gestures or expressions. So I respond to that." (S).

This is supported by observational findings where the parent responds to subtle behavioral cues, such as changes in facial expression or body movement, demonstrating high sensitivity to non-verbal signals. Meanwhile, Informant L integrates verbal and activity-based communication:

"I usually talk while doing something together, so he understands better. If just talking, he loses focus." (L).

Observation confirms that communication often occurs during shared activities, reinforcing attention and comprehension simultaneously. For Informant LS, communication is closely linked to attention regulation:

"I call his name repeatedly and make sure he looks at me before talking, otherwise he doesn't listen." (LS).

This pattern is also observed in practice, where the parent frequently re-engages the child's attention before delivering instructions. These variations demonstrate that communication extends beyond verbal exchange and includes responsiveness to gestures, context, and behavioral signals. Thus, communication within democratic parenting is inherently multimodal, adaptive, and functionally embedded in the child's developmental needs.

Cross-Case Interpretation of Democratic Parenting

Overall, the findings demonstrate that warmth, control, and communication are consistently present but unevenly prioritized across cases. Empirical evidence from interviews and observations (Figure 2–Figure 5) shows that parents selectively intensify certain dimensions based on the child's developmental needs. This indicates that democratic parenting operates as a dynamic and negotiated configuration, rather than a fixed or universal model. Each case reflects a unique adaptation process, where parenting strategies are continuously adjusted through interaction. This interpretation moves beyond descriptive categorization and provides a more nuanced understanding of parenting in the context of disability.

Scientific Contribution

This study contributes to the literature in several important ways:

1. It challenges the assumption that democratic parenting is a uniform and stable construct by demonstrating its variability across cases.
2. It shows that parenting in the context of disability is inherently adaptive, situational, and shaped by specific developmental conditions.
3. It provides a comparative multi-case analysis that highlights intra-pattern variation, offering a more nuanced and empirically grounded understanding of parenting practices.

4. Conclusion

This study confirms that parenting practices among parents of children with disabilities at RA Ulumul Quran Al Madani Banjarbaru predominantly reflect a democratic orientation; however, this orientation does not operate as a uniform model. Instead, democratic parenting emerges as a context-dependent and adaptive configuration shaped by the child's developmental condition. Cross-case analysis reveals clear and specific variations across informants. In children with autism, warmth functions primarily as a mechanism for emotional regulation. In developmental delay, warmth shifts toward cognitive stimulation through activity-based engagement. In hearing impairment, communication becomes the dominant dimension, characterized by structured verbal articulation and clarity. Meanwhile, in ADHD, control is the most dynamic aspect, requiring continuous adjustment to manage attention and hyperactivity. These findings demonstrate that each case reflects a distinct prioritization and functional use of warmth, control, and communication.

Thus, variation—not uniformity—constitutes the defining characteristic of democratic parenting in this context. Parenting practices are continuously reconstructed through interaction, indicating that democratic parenting should be understood as a flexible and situational process rather than a fixed balance of dimensions. The study has important practical and conceptual implications. Practically, it highlights the need for targeted and adaptive parenting support programs that strengthen parents' abilities in interpreting children's behavior, applying flexible discipline, and developing communication strategies tailored to specific disabilities. Conceptually, this study refines the understanding of democratic parenting as a negotiated and context-sensitive practice. This perspective contributes to a more nuanced framework for analyzing parenting in inclusive education and provides a basis for future research to explore variability across broader contexts.

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