



Parental role in supporting inclusive education for children with autism

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Abstract. This research examines the role of parents in supporting the education of children with autism in special schools in Langsa City, Aceh. With the increasing number of children with autism spectrum disorders, attention to their educational needs has become very important. This research aims to identify the various roles played by parents and analyze the impact of their support on the social and academic development of the child. Qualitative descriptive methods were employed to assess the impact of parental involvement in the educational process on children's learning outcomes and social interactions. Data was collected using purposive sampling techniques. Data collection techniques used observation, interviews, and document studies, with the instruments used being observation guidelines and interview guidelines. The research results show that parents function as the primary supporters, who not only provide motivation but also play a crucial role in communication with teachers and in monitoring their child's development. Parental

support has been proven to enhance children's self-confidence and social skills, thereby creating a more inclusive learning environment. Involving parents in the planning and evaluation of educational programs can significantly improve children's learning outcomes.

Introduction

Autism, or more commonly known as autism spectrum disorder (ASD), is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects the way individuals interact, communicate, and behave (Lord et al., 2018, 2020). This disorder not only affects children but can also continue into adulthood, causing significant challenges in various aspects of life (Kamruzzaman et al., 2019). According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2020, it is estimated that one in every 54 children in the United States is diagnosed with autism. This figure shows a significant increase compared to the previous decade, where the prevalence of autism was recorded as one in 150 children. This indicates the need for greater attention to education and appropriate support for these children, especially in the context of developing social and communication skills that are essential for daily life (Rahmahtrisilvia et al., 2019; Sharma et al., 2018).

The increase in the number of children with autism also reflects broader societal challenges (Rahmahtrisilvia et al., 2023; Rahmahtrisilvia, Setiawan, et al., 2024), including the need to

understand and accept diversity in how individuals function and interact. Many parents and educators report feeling less prepared to support children with these special needs, who often require a more individualized and structured approach. Research indicates that early interventions, including behavioral therapy and tailored educational programs, can have a profoundly positive impact on the social and emotional development of children with autism (Alohali, 2019; Landa, 2018; Smith et al., 2021). This suggests that increasing awareness and knowledge about autism can lead to a more inclusive and supportive environment for individuals with autism.

However, despite the progress in understanding autism, there is still a lot of stigma and misunderstanding surrounding this condition (Scheerer et al., 2024). Many in society still view children with autism as "different" or "abnormal," which can lead to social isolation and a lack of support. This is exacerbated by the lack of adequate resources and training for educators and healthcare professionals in handling children with autism spectrum disorders. Analysis of this situation shows that better education and training are needed to prepare society to face the challenges posed by autism, as well as to create a more friendly environment for individuals with this disorder (Rahmahtrisilvia, Amani, et al., 2024).

Thus, to improve the quality of life for children with autism, a holistic and collaborative approach is needed (Gao & Drani, 2024). This includes the involvement of parents, educators, and health professionals in designing and implementing programs that support the development of the child (Rojas-Torres et al., 2020). In addition, advocacy for better policies and resource support is also crucial to ensure that these children have the access they need to develop optimally. With these measures, we not only help children with autism but also build a more inclusive society that understands diversity (Tsaputra, 2019).

Inclusive education is one of the most important efforts to achieve equality and justice for children with disabilities, including children with autism spectrum disorders. In the global context, inclusive education has been recognized as a practical approach to ensure that every child, regardless of their background or physical condition, has the same right to receive quality education (Marlina et al., 2019). Through inclusive education, children with autism are not only allowed to access education but also to interact and collaborate with their peers in regular school environments (Xue, 2025). This is very important because social interaction is one aspect that often poses a challenge for children with autism, and inclusive education can help them develop the social skills needed to function effectively in society (Suhardita et al., 2024).

However, despite this noble goal, the implementation of inclusive education still faces various significant challenges. One of the main challenges is the readiness of schools to provide a friendly environment for children with disabilities. Many schools still lack adequate infrastructure, both physically and in terms of human resources, to support the learning needs of children with autism (Leifler et al., 2021; Widana et al., 2023). According to data released by the Ministry of Education and Culture, only about 30% of schools in Indonesia have effectively implemented the principles of inclusive education. This suggests that there is a pressing need to enhance the capacity of schools to deliver inclusive educational services that cater to the diverse needs of all students. Moreover, teacher competence is also a crucial factor in the success of inclusive education. Many teachers have not received adequate training to handle the special needs of children with autism, so they feel less confident in managing an inclusive classroom (Johnson et al., 2024; Citrawan et al., 2024). Teachers equipped with the right knowledge and skills are more likely to create a supportive learning environment for all students. Therefore, training and professional development for teachers should be a priority in efforts to improve inclusive education. By providing the right support to teachers, we can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment for children with disabilities. Parental support also plays a critical role in the success of inclusive education.

Parents not only function as the primary supporters in their child's education but also as advocates who fight for their child's educational rights. In many cases, parents who are actively involved in their child's education can help overcome obstacles that may arise in the inclusion process. They can collaborate with the school to ensure that their child's special needs are met and that they receive fair access to educational resources. In addition, parental involvement in their child's education can also boost the child's self-confidence and encourage them to participate more actively in school activities.

In the context of inclusive education, it is essential to recognize that success is not solely measured by academic aspects, but also by the child's social and emotional development. Inclusive education offers children with autism opportunities to learn socialization and interaction skills, which in turn can help them develop essential social skills. This educational model has proven effective in enhancing the social and academic skills of children with autism. Thus, inclusive education is not only beneficial for children with disabilities but also for the entire school community, which can learn to appreciate differences and build a more inclusive environment.

Overall, inclusive education is an important step in creating a more just and equitable society for all children, including those with special needs. However, to achieve this goal, close collaboration between schools, parents, and the community is necessary. By addressing the existing challenges and enhancing support for inclusive education, we can ensure that every child, without exception, has the opportunity to develop and reach their full potential. Therefore, efforts to improve and expand inclusive education should be a primary focus in future education policies, with the hope of creating a better environment for all children (Siller et al., 2021).

The role of parents becomes very important in supporting the success of inclusive education for children with autism. As the primary individuals responsible for a child's growth and development, parents have a significant influence on their child's psychological, social, and academic development. Research Kern Koegel et al. (2016) shows that parental involvement in children's education not only affects academic outcomes but also shapes the child's character and personality. In this context, parents play a primary role as supporters, providing motivation and encouragement to their children to engage with their social environment. With consistent support, children with autism can more easily adapt and learn in an inclusive educational environment.

Parental involvement in the education of children in special schools can significantly contribute to the child's social and emotional development. Research shows that children who receive full support from their parents tend to have higher self-confidence and better social skills (Crowell et al., 2019). This shows that parents not only play a role in academic aspects but also in building children's self-confidence. When parents are active in the learning process, children feel more valued and supported, which in turn increases their motivation to participate in social activities at school. Thus, the role of parents in inclusive education is crucial for creating children who are not only academically intelligent but also capable of interacting well in their social environment. However, many parents are still struggling alone without adequate training support, limited facilities, and a social environment that does not fully accept children with autism, making it difficult for parents to create a safe social space for their children.

Because parents are the closest figures to the child, they play a very important role in supporting the child's development. Parental involvement in the child's education process, especially in the context of special schools, can have a significant impact on the child's success (Reyes et al., 2020). By understanding the challenges faced by children with autism, parents can provide more effective support. For example, they can communicate with teachers and school staff to ensure that the teaching methods applied are in line with the child's needs. Additionally, parents can help their

children prepare to face social situations that may be challenging for them, such as interactions with peers.

Parental support is crucial in children's education, especially for those with autism, as it enables active involvement that helps monitor academic and social progress, provides constructive feedback, and aids the child in overcoming school-related difficulties. This creates a sense of safety and comfort that increases the chances of success in special schools (Purnadewi & Widana, 2023). Additionally, parents serve as a bridge between schools and the community, building support networks that involve family, friends, and professionals, making this collaboration crucial for creating an inclusive environment and raising public awareness about inclusive education. With the right support, children can not only achieve academic success but also develop the social and emotional skills necessary to interact with the world around them, making parental involvement at every step of education crucial for the growth and development of children with autism in a more inclusive society.

Langsa City, Aceh, has a social and cultural context that influences the treatment of children with autism by the community, where societal acceptance is crucial for their development and well-being. Unfortunately, the understanding of autism is still minimal among the population, holding a negative stigma that hinders social interaction and the participation of children in community activities (Yu et al., 2020). Furthermore, the availability of inclusive educational facilities in Langsa is also a challenge, as there are only a few schools that offer adequate educational programs for children with special needs, making it difficult for parents to find suitable education. Government support through inclusive education policies and programs still needs to be improved, as its implementation is uneven; several studies show that teachers have received special training on autism, creating a gap in the knowledge and skills needed to support these children in schools (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

Finally, access to therapy services and other support for children with autism in Langsa City also poses a significant challenge. The availability of these services is limited, and many parents must travel long distances to access the necessary services. According to data from local health institutions, there are only two therapy centers providing services for children with autism, while the demand continues to increase. This indicates the need for more attention from the government and society to improve the accessibility of therapy and support services, so that children with autism can reach their full potential. Therefore, to create a more inclusive and supportive environment, collaboration between the government, society, and educational institutions is necessary to address the existing challenges.

This study specifically focuses on the role of parents because they are the leading and most consistent figures in a child's life, and their influence on the academic, social, and emotional development of children with autism is more direct and continuous than that of teachers or peers. Support from teachers and peers is indeed important, but it is more situational and limited to the school environment. In contrast, parents are involved in almost all aspects of their child's life, from managing routines and providing motivation to ensuring that their child has access to appropriate educational and therapeutic services. By examining the role of parents in depth, this research can identify support strategies that can be strengthened at home and serve as the foundation for more effective collaboration with teachers and peers at school, thereby forming the basis for the development of more comprehensive support programs. The research question in this study is: What is the role and support of parents in the development and education of children with autism in Langsa City?

Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the role of parents in the educational psychology of children with autism in special schools. The descriptive qualitative approach was chosen because it can provide an in-depth picture of the phenomenon being studied, namely, the interactions and support of parents towards their children with autism. Qualitative research focuses on understanding and interpreting the subjective experiences of individuals (Ishtiaq, 2019), which in this context are the experiences of parents and children with autism.

In this study, the researcher aims to explore how parents contribute to the education of their children with autism, both at home and in special schools. The data obtained will provide insights into the strategies used by parents to support their children's social, emotional, and academic development. This research also aims to understand the challenges faced by parents in the education process of their children with autism, as well as how they collaborate with the school to create an inclusive and supportive environment.

By employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the researchers aim to identify key themes that emerge from the experiences of parents and children, which can then be used to inform recommendations for education practitioners and policymakers. This research not only aims to describe the phenomenon but also to provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the relationship between parents and children with autism in the context of inclusive education. Data was collected using purposive sampling techniques. The research was conducted from March to May 2025.

Additionally, this research examines the impact of parental support on children's development in special schools. By evaluating children's learning outcomes and social interactions, this research aims to provide empirical evidence regarding the importance of parental involvement in the educational process. Through qualitative descriptive methods, this research aims to provide educators and policymakers with better insights for designing more effective programs for children with autism.

In this study, the researcher employed three data collection techniques: interviews, observations, and document studies. Interviews will be conducted with parents to explore their experiences, perspectives, and strategies in supporting the education of children with autism. Semi-structured interviews will provide flexibility for the researcher to explore relevant topics while still adhering to the established guidelines (Tambunan & Simanjuntak, 2021). Observation will also be conducted in inclusive school environments to understand the interactions between children with autism and their peers, as well as the role of teachers in supporting these children. This observation aims to obtain richer data regarding the social and emotional dynamics occurring in the classroom, as well as how parents and teachers collaborate in supporting the child's development (Morse & Field, 1996). The documentation study will include an analysis of academic records, development reports, and other relevant documents related to the education of children with autism. By collecting data from various sources, the researchers hope to obtain a more holistic picture of the role of parents in the education of their children in special schools (Scărneci-Domnişoru, 2021).

The subjects of this research consist of two main groups: parents and children with autism enrolled in special schools. The criteria for subject selection in this study include parents of children diagnosed with autism who have participated in inclusive education for at least one year. This is important to ensure that parents have sufficient experience in supporting their children's education in an inclusive environment (Nassaji, 2020).

Children with autism involved in this study must be between the ages of 6 and 14, which is the age range when children typically begin entering the formal education system. In this context, children are expected to have received educational support from their parents, as well as to have experience in special schools that allow them to interact with peers and teachers (Miller, 2021). Additionally, this research will involve parents from diverse educational and socioeconomic backgrounds to gain a broader perspective on the role of parents in supporting the education of children with autism. By involving a variety of backgrounds, the research is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of the challenges and strategies used by parents in supporting their children in special schools (Narot & Kiettikunwong, 2024).

In this study, thematic analysis is used to gain an understanding of the experiences of parents and children with autism when they participate in inclusive education. The process begins with observation, interviews, and document research to collect data (Denny & Weckesser, 2022). To ensure the accuracy of the information, the data is transcribed. The researchers conducted initial coding to mark important parts of the data (Kara, 2023). Then, the data was grouped into major themes that reflect the experiences and issues faced by parents.

The influence of social support on educational strategies is one example of the inter-theme relationships examined through this analysis (Percy et al., 2015). The results of the analysis will be presented in a systematic research report (Moriña, 2019). The purpose of this report is to provide recommendations to stakeholders and support more inclusive educational practices. It is hoped that the research results can be effectively applied, benefiting children with autism by connecting them with the community.

Results and Discussion

The Role of Parents in Supporting Education

In this study, which involved 20 parents of children with autism in special schools in Langsa City, Aceh, it was revealed that the majority of parents have diverse educational backgrounds; 40% hold bachelor's degrees, while 60% of them have completed senior high school (Table 1). The types of jobs held by the parents also varied, with 40% working as civil servants, which affected the time they could allocate to accompany their children. As many as 70% of parents report feeling stressed and anxious about their child's educational development, which could potentially hinder positive interactions between them (McIntyre et al., 2023).

Table 1. Parental Education Demographics

No	Education	Percentage
1	Bachelor's Degrees	40
2	Senior High Schools	60

The profile of children with autism shows that 50% are diagnosed with mild autism spectrum disorder, and 60% of them are making good progress in basic subjects, although 40% are experiencing difficulties (Wei et al., 2015). As many as 40% of children also face challenges in social interaction, which can lead to isolation. This research emphasizes the importance of consistent support from parents and teachers to help these children develop the social and academic skills necessary in an inc (Gunn & Delafield-Butt, 2016).

The research results show that the role of parents is crucial in supporting the education of children with autism. As many as 80% of parents reported being actively involved in their child's learning process at home, such as helping with school assignments and making time for studying together.

According to [Hyder and Anbar \(2025\)](#), this involvement has a positive impact on children's motivation and academic achievement, particularly when parents regularly read with their children.

Parents also function as a link between school and home, with 70% involved in communication with teachers to monitor their child's development. This is in line with [\(Hidayat & Arini, 2022\)](#). Research has shown that good communication between parents and teachers fosters a more supportive learning environment. Case studies demonstrate that parents who actively communicate can identify their children's specific needs and find suitable solutions. When parents actively communicate with teachers, they can better identify the unique needs of children with autism and participate in finding tailored solutions. Regular communication between teachers and parents helps evaluate the child's progress and adjust interventions according to their individual needs.

However, not all parents feel capable of providing optimal support for their child's education. As many as admit to lacking knowledge on how to educate children with autism, which can hinder the necessary support [\(Lee et al., 2024\)](#). Therefore, schools need to offer training for parents, enabling them to understand their children's educational needs better. Training and education programs for parents, conducted either in groups or individually, significantly enhance parents' knowledge, confidence, and ability to implement effective strategies to support their children with autism.

To support their child's education, parents implement various strategies. As many as 75% of parents create a consistent daily routine, providing a sense of security and helping children adapt to the learning environment [\(Selman & Dilworth-Bart, 2024\)](#). Additionally, 60% of parents use visual aids, such as pictures and diagrams, which have proven effective in helping children's understanding [\(Amani et al., 2021, 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2022; Paramuditha et al., 2025\)](#). The development of social skills is also a focus, with 50% of parents encouraging their children to interact with peers through group activities, which is important for improving children's communication [\(Therrien & Light, 2018\)](#).

The Influence of Parental Support on the Development of Children with Autism

Parental support has a significant impact on a child's development. Children who receive active support tend to show progress in academic and social aspects, with 70% reporting improvements in academic skills and interaction abilities. Adds that emotional support from parents can boost children's self-confidence, positively impacting their social development [\(Mirabile et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2021\)](#). Additionally, children who are actively involved feel more motivated to learn, with 65% reporting increased motivation when their parents are involved.

It is important to note that parental support is not limited to academic aspects; emotional and social support are also very important [\(Sari et al., 2021\)](#). Children with strong emotional support tend to have better social skills and can adapt to social environments. This indicates that the role of parents is crucial in helping children with autism develop holistically.

Inclusive education is an important approach to integrating children with autism into the general education environment [\(Fitriyani & Haryono, 2024; Siller et al., 2021; Xue, 2025\)](#). The success of inclusive education is greatly influenced by parental involvement, which serves not only as emotional support but also as a key driver in the learning process. Research indicates that actively involved parents can positively impact their child's academic and social development [\(Cosso et al., 2022; Huda & Sa'diyah, 2024\)](#). This involvement includes good communication with teachers, monitoring learning progress at home, and support in the development of social skills. Open and regular communication between parents and teachers is essential. It helps align strategies between

home and school, address challenges quickly, and support a consistent learning environment. Parents prefer email for efficiency, but also value face-to-face meetings for important issues.

Parents can implement various strategies to support their child's education, such as creating a positive learning environment and utilizing community resources. Research shows that good communication between parents and teachers can result in a more holistic approach to supporting children (Bipath & Oosthuizen, 2023; Ma et al., 2024). Additionally, emotional support from parents can boost a child's self-confidence, enabling them to interact more effectively with their peers. Positive parental attitudes and emotional support foster better parent-child interactions, which can lead to improved social confidence and enhanced peer engagement. In addition, peer support can provide emotional support, advocacy, and knowledge for parents of other children with autism, especially in environments with limited resources.

Although challenges remain, such as social stigma and the lack of public understanding of autism, the role of parents remains crucial (Botha et al., 2022). By building a broader support network and collaborating with schools, parents can help create a more inclusive environment (Alinsunurin, 2020; Muhammad et al., 2024). This is not only beneficial for children with autism but also for the entire community, which can learn to appreciate diversity. Overall, the success of inclusive education depends on the synergy between parents, educators, and the community. With a collaborative approach, it is hoped that children with special needs can grow and develop optimally in a supportive environment.

Parents are advised to be actively involved in their child's education, including attending school meetings and communicating with teachers (Schmid & Garrels, 2021; Tan et al., 2020; Salsabila et al., 2025). This involvement can enhance the child's motivation and academic achievement. Parents also need to gain knowledge about autism and appropriate teaching techniques through seminars or workshops (Chaidi & Drigas, 2020; Deb et al., 2020). Creating a supportive home environment, with time for play and learning, as well as responding to the child's emotional needs, is also very important for the development of their communication and social skills.

Special schools need to develop special training programs for teachers on teaching strategies for children with autism (de Assis Pereira et al., 2024; Hsiao & Sorensen Petersen, 2019). A friendly and inclusive environment is important to ensure all students feel accepted. A strong partnership between parents and schools is also essential, enabling effective communication and collaboration in supporting children's development. Involving parents in the planning and evaluation of educational programs can significantly improve children's learning outcomes.

Further research is recommended to explore specific strategies used by parents and teachers in supporting children with autism in special schools. Longitudinal research, which observes the interactions between parents, children, and teachers, can provide deeper insights into best practices. In addition, the development of measurement tools to assess children's progress in special schools is highly necessary, so that parents and educators can more effectively meet the child's specific needs. Research on the impact of training programs for parents and teachers can also provide valuable insights for the development of more effective educational policies.

Conclusion

In this study, it was found that the role of parents is very important in supporting the education of children with autism in inclusive school environments, especially in the city of Langsa, Aceh. The active involvement of parents has a positive impact on the social, emotional, and academic development of the child. Research shows that parents who understand autism and inclusive

education strategies can help their children adapt to the school environment and build positive relationships with teachers and classmates. The role of parents is to create an environment that supports their child's development at home, such as providing time for play, learning, and social interaction. Parental support has a very positive impact on the growth and development of children with autism.

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