

# Analysis of Teachers' Pedagogical Competence in Handling Children with Special Needs in Inclusive Schools (Case Study in Talenta Kindergarten & Fun and Play Kindergarten, Semarang City)

Firdaus Sa'adah <sup>1</sup>, Naili Rohmah <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Negeri Semarang; Indonesia; uusfrdssh382@students.unnes.ac.id

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Negeri Semarang; Indonesia; nailirohmah@mail.unnes.ac.id

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## Abstract

The study aimed to analyse teachers' pedagogical competence in dealing with children with special needs in inclusive schools. This research is important because the government has established an inclusion system in all schools. Inclusive schools have students from different backgrounds. So that teacher competence becomes very important, especially pedagogical competence, because this is the key to successful learning, in qualitative research conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. Seeing field conditions directly, looking at documentation of lesson plans to evaluations, and interviewing the teachers involved can provide more in-depth information: triangulating time, sources, and techniques tested data. The results explained that Fun and Play Kindergarten and Talenta Kindergarten teachers had the best pedagogical skills. This can be seen from the pedagogical competence of teachers according to Permendikbud Number 137 in assessing aspects of child development; evaluating theories of play and learning; creating development activities that are by the curriculum; organising educational development activities; and developing children's potential.

## Keywords

Inclusion; PAUD; Pedagogical Competence; Teachers

## Corresponding Author

**Firdaus Sa'adah**

Universitas Negeri Semarang; Indonesia; uusfrdssh382@students.unnes.ac.id

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is defined by Permendiknas RI No. 70 of 2009 as "an education system that accepts all students who have abnormalities and have the potential for intelligence and/or special talents to attend education or learning in one educational environment together with students in general." (Ariani, 2022). Integrated public schools are available for children with special needs (Ester, 2021). The school is comparable to public schools in terms of curriculum, teachers, resources, and teaching and learning activities (Yunus et al., 2023). Inclusive education fulfils the human right to learn (Gusti, 2021).

Schools, communities, and governments can collaborate to provide special education students the support they need (Khurotul Uyun, 2024). The government has stipulated that educational institutions must comply with the National Education Standards (SNP) to optimise education and ensure that children with special needs have adequate facilities in inclusive schools (Wulandari & Hendriani, 2021). The SNP serves as the main reference for setting minimum standards that must be met by all education providers (Tilaar, 2006). To ensure that the same education standards are applied in every educational



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institution in Indonesia, the National Education Standards (SNP) include standards for educational institutions and education personnel (Fitri et al., 2024). The collaboration of teachers, parents, and relevant experts is needed to create an inclusive ECD programme that meets children's needs (Yesi et al., 2019). The programme provides children with high-quality education, improves social and cognitive skills, and instills tolerance and equality (Jauhari et al., 2023). Inclusive ECD programmes can achieve their goals with various learning approaches and methods tailored to the needs of the children. These programmes can also provide the necessary resources, such as books and specialised support (Lestaringrum, 2017).

To help children with special needs, educators must be highly qualified. According to the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia Regulation No. 16/2007, "Every teacher must fulfil the standards of academic qualifications and teacher competencies that apply nationally." (Wulandari & Hendriani, 2021). To assess a teacher's scholastic competence, it can be seen from their performance in the classroom, as well as the results of their proportionality and eligibility tests (Lafendry, 2020). Pedagogic, personality, social, and professional competencies are among educators' main areas of expertise. These four areas play a role in setting the criteria for teacher competence (Annisa Alfath et al., 2022). Anggraini (2022) cites Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 on National Education Standards, which states that pedagogic competence is the teacher's ability to oversee all learning activities, including planning, implementing, assessing, and growing students to reach their full potential. Dealing with children with disabilities requires finding these children, helping them reach their full developmental potential, and overcoming barriers in the regular classroom. Teachers in inclusive classrooms must have extensive background information about students with special needs. Improving one's skills to handle special needs students while the instructor is there is one method that educators can use to help special needs students better (Dewi Kartini et al., 2023). Teachers must better understand the characteristics of specific children, understand the theories and principles of learning about children with special needs, create a curriculum, organise educational learning, communicate well, and evaluate children according to their abilities, all based on pedagogical competence (Nada, 2022). One of the duties of teachers is to ensure that they have the best pedagogical competence to help children with disabilities. However, this pedagogical competence is difficult to improve.

Mayor's Regulation No. 76/2020 on the Implementation of Inclusive Education was issued by the Semarang City Government. The regulation states that all formal schools accept inclusive education. According to Mayor Hendrar Prihadi, "Semarang City is one of the cities that declared inclusive education, but because public schools are not ready to provide inclusive education services, only a few public schools (elementary and junior high schools) in Semarang City offer this service. TK Talenta is an early childhood centre in Semarang that follows an inclusive system and cares for children with disabilities (Kumala et al., 2022).

In addition, Fun and Play Kindergarten has pledged to accept children with special needs in Semarang City (Wahyu et al., 2014). In addition, some institutions treat children with disabilities differently, and there are still children who are unable to receive formal education. Only a few children with disabilities go to inclusive schools or have minimal access to education. Data collected by the Ministry of Education and Culture supports this statement. Of the 1.6 million children with special needs in Indonesia in 2017, 115,000 attended *Sekolah Luar Biasa* (SLB), and only 299,000, or around 18 per cent, attended inclusive education. Regular schools are not prepared to accept and care for children with special needs, which leads to differential treatment. Some of the reasons why schools reject such children are as follows: a) Regular schools believe that special schools are the best place for children with special needs; b) The number of teachers or special assistants in public schools is insufficient to assist children with special needs; and c) The facilities and equipment needed to meet the needs of students with special needs are not yet available (Abdin & Tetelepta, 2021). Subagya agreed that many children with special needs in Central Java, totalling 26,568 people, or 79.37% of the total children with special needs, do not have the opportunity to receive the right to education.

According to scientific research conducted by researchers in the field and the findings of interviews with teachers on 26 February 2024, Talenta Kindergarten has been an inclusive school since 2013. Fun and Play Kindergarten has been an inclusive school since 2023. These inclusive schools accept students with special needs each new school year. The school accepts children with special needs for two reasons: a) to help children socialise with their peers; b) to provide the same educational rights as other children; c) to provide the necessary facilities to grow naturally; and d) to provide services in the process of dealing with delays and disorders experienced by children with special needs.

There has been socialisation or training on dealing with children with special needs at Talenta Kindergarten and Fun and Play Kindergarten. At Talenta Kindergarten, the Semarang city government provides socialisation about inclusive education, and at Fun and Play Kindergarten, the government provides socialisation by inviting external resource persons. To handle children with special needs, teachers at Talenta and Fun and Play kindergartens have strong pedagogical competence. However, only a small number of Talenta Kindergarten teachers received government training. The driving teacher was the only one not participating in the training. The driving teacher transforms into a learning leader and a driving agent of educational transformation. Therefore, they have received training in education programmes to support learning, especially with children with special needs, because they understand the developmental aspects, characteristics, and learning programmes. In addition, Fun and Play Kindergarten teachers only participate in the therapeutic activities provided by the school.

In addition to the abovementioned issues, teachers face other problems in implementing inclusive education, such as teachers' lack of knowledge, skills, and competencies in inclusive schools. And many of the problems encountered in the field mean that many children with disabilities are enrolled in public schools, but do not receive their entitlements (Islam et al., 2024). This shows that the government has not prepared an inclusive education system well. As a result, more tasks must be carried out by teachers working in the field to solve problems that arise in the field. This makes it very difficult for teachers to create a good classroom situation if teachers still have limitations in carrying out education.

Therefore, the above problems are important to study so that researchers are interested in analysing teachers' pedagogical competence in dealing with children with special needs in inclusive schools.

## **2. METHODS**

Qualitative case studies were used as a research method. The research was conducted at Talenta Kindergarten on Puspowarno Tengah IX Street, No.6, Salamanmloyo, West Semarang District, Semarang City, and at Fun and Play Kindergarten on Jatingaleh 1 Street, No. 272B, Ngesrep Village, Banyumanik District, Semarang City. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique for selecting research locations. Triangulation was also used. Interviews, observation, and documentation were used for data analysis. Four Kindergarten B teachers at Talenta Kindergarten and two Kindergarten A teachers at Fun and Play Kindergarten were interviewed, discussing teachers' pedagogical competencies. Documentation was conducted by looking at lesson plans, teacher data, and data on children with special needs. In addition, observing learning inside and outside the classroom is how observations were made.

## **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Kindergarten Teacher Pedagogic Competence**

Government Regulation (PP) No. 74/2008 says "Competence is a set of knowledge, skills, and behaviours that must be owned, lived, mastered, and actualised by teachers in carrying out their professional duties,". According to Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 19/2005, pedagogic competence is managing learning that includes understanding learners, designing and

implementing learning, evaluating learning outcomes, and developing to maximise their potential.

Based on the components of pedagogic competence that have been described above, here is a further explanation of the components of teacher pedagogic competence at Talenta Kindergarten and Fun and Play Kindergarten:

***Understand the Characteristics of Children from Physical, Moral, Social, Cultural, Emotional, and Intellectual Perspectives***

To provide appropriate treatment for students with special needs, the first step at school is the identification and assessment process. Both processes should be carried out as early as possible (Richo, 2021). Teachers' lack of understanding about the appropriate educational services for students with special needs can complicate the learning process. Therefore, teachers must deeply understand children with special needs to provide optimal educational services (Komariyah et al., 2017). In terms of readiness to accept children with special needs and unique characteristics, schools need to implement appropriate strategies to support the development of their skills (Giovani, 2022).

In Talenta, the types of children with disabilities, as well as their potential intelligence and exceptional abilities, are known to kindergarten instructors because of their extensive knowledge of children with disabilities. Instructors must strongly understand their students' traits to give them the best education possible and help them reach their full academic potential. Teachers' knowledge of how children are recognised is essential. Physical signs alone are not enough for this diagnosis. It is important to intervene early and consistently with children with disabilities, especially those exhibiting behavioural problems (Ashari, 2021). This tool for detecting children with disabilities will greatly help teachers when trying to classify their students. Symptoms of each illness category in children are included in the statement list of this instrument. Teachers use the identification results of this instrument to categorise children with disorders or deviations into groups according to the child's characteristics. Thus, teachers can provide better services after knowing or discovering the child's characteristics at the beginning of learning.

As the teacher of the B1 inclusion class at Talenta Kindergarten, Miss Klara, stated that:

“At the beginning of the new student intake, Talenta School starts the identification. The principal and a psychologist do the identification. A list of statements indicates the child's special needs. The identification results are used to evaluate each child's characteristics related to physical symptoms. These attributes serve as an evaluation of how teachers accept children with special needs in inclusion classes or full special needs classes”.

Teachers first conduct a needs assessment at the beginning of the school year to tailor instruction to each student's strengths and areas for improvement. In addition to students, classroom instructors, assistants, and special education teachers conduct informal identification. Schools providing inclusive education can use identification findings to inform teacher professional development and intervention initiatives (Ariani, 2022). Despite this, GPK instructors are still lacking in many schools (Laila, 2018). Teachers can tailor their lessons to each student's unique strengths and weaknesses based on the identification and subsequent assessment results. Teachers can use these findings to tailor their lessons to the unique requirements of their students (Ashari, 2021). The following are some of the reasons why evaluation of children with disabilities is necessary, according to Slavia et al. (2010): 1) having a complete knowledge of the child's skills; 2) categorising, locating and deciding on programs; 3) setting educational goals and directions; 4) creating individualised education programs; and 5) deciding on methods and evaluating the learning environment (Ningsih & Fitriani, 2022).

As the B1 inclusion class teacher of Talenta Kindergarten, Miss Willin said that:

“The evaluation process is conducted in three stages. Firstly, observing children's behaviour and learning styles while learning; secondly, observing aspects of children's development; and

finally, observing children's potential and needs. The analysis results are useful for the class and special assistant teachers when creating the learning programme. Therefore, it is very important for inclusive schools to identify and evaluate children's characteristics to discover their opportunities and obstacles”.

Fun and Play Kindergarten teachers understand children's special needs. However, some teachers cannot distinguish the type and level of the child's disorder. At the beginning of admission, Fun and Play School identifies the child. The purpose of this very basic identification finding is to find out the child's developmental problems compared to other children of the same age (Sri, 2023). As such, the findings cannot be directly used to support the identification of disorders. A group of school psychologists also used a list of statements as an identification technique in their instrument. The identification results evaluate the child's characteristics based on physical symptoms. The identification results are sent to the homeroom teacher for examination.

As the Fun and Play Kindergarten A1 inclusion class teacher, Miss Nita stated that:

“At the beginning of a new intake, an evaluation of the child's needs is required. The school principal and a psychologist staff member conduct an assessment test to evaluate the physical features of each child. The evaluation results are submitted to the homeroom teacher for further consideration of the learning plan. In addition, the teacher assesses the child's aptitude, delay, and learning style. Thus, two broad outlines are provided for teachers in providing subject matter”.

### ***Understand Learning Theories and Learning Principles***

Once teachers understand the characteristics of students with special needs through the assessment process, they can design learning strategies tailored to the needs, potential, and obstacles of each student with special needs in the classroom. In this way, all students with special needs have equal opportunities to actively participate in the learning process alongside other students while still being accommodated according to their abilities (Nada, 2022). Teachers strive to build optimal learning readiness by adapting learning approaches to the needs of children with special needs. Learning activities begin with fun activities and games designed to train concentration and develop children's skills (Madjid et al., 2024). Teachers' strategies for teaching children with special needs (ABK) must be adapted to specially designed learning programmes (Giovani, 2022).

In Talenta Kindergarten, the indicators of teacher competence in mastering the field of development and learning principles are (Purnomo, 2019) 1) Teachers provide opportunities for children to develop areas of development according to their age and learning skills by adapting the learning process to the child. 2) Teachers should always change the next learning activity according to the child's level of understanding. 3) The teacher can explain why the activity or activities are carried out, both those that suit the child and those that do not. 4) The teacher can explain why the activity or activities are done.

Talenta Kindergarten teachers have a strong understanding of all aspects of development, including learning through play theory. Children with special needs are attracted to play activities because the early childhood world is a place of play. According to Serpong et al. (2024), children's creativity is expected to be stimulated and nurtured through fun learning activities, such as play, because of their early ability to develop themselves (Serpong et al., 2024). Early years children can explore the environment as they join the classroom. Students learn the ABCs, 123s, and vocabulary in a fun atmosphere with easy-to-understand songs and language. Nonetheless, teachers' efforts to provide play activities for children should be combined with learning that can help children's areas of development. Thus, children can achieve their learning goals and better understand the learning materials. Therefore, regardless of play activities, teachers must understand the basis of children's learning.

As the B1 inclusion class teacher of Talenta Kindergarten, Miss Willin said that:

“Teachers must understand the theoretical basis of play and learning because play and learning are the main focus of children's learning in Kindergarten B1. As a result, teachers must pay attention and consider the approaches, strategies, and methods used. Thus, children are expected to accept the learning materials because they are harmonised with play. Education at Talenta TK is based on the principles of equity, diverse learning approaches, and the principle of individualised needs, which means that each student has unique skills and needs”.

Fun and Play Kindergarten teachers have an understanding of learning and play theories. Montessori believed that children learn through their five senses. Methods, demonstrations, and assignments are the three pillars on which Montessori education is based in the classroom. Setyowahyudi (2020) outlines three methods to teach children about the world: the experimentation method encourages them to be more active by letting them experiment themselves and observe the process and results; the demonstration method shows a process or event so that children can replicate it and gain a better understanding of it; and the assignment method involves practice for children (Setyowahyudi, 2020). Based on the premise that children learn best in an open and varied atmosphere, the Reggio Emilia approach encourages student independence (Nuraeni & Sharina, 2020). Moreover, Jhe Play believes children learn through their motor skills and strengths.

As the Fun and Play Kindergarten A2 inclusion class teacher, Miss Laras said that:

“Fun and Play Kindergarten emphasises play in harmony with learning, giving freedom to all children. According to ECD theories such as Ki Hajar Dewantara, Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and Jhe Play, this means that play while learning is balanced with learning. However, these theories say that children should be free to play until they are in the mood to learn”.

### ***Create A Curriculum Related to Development Areas***

The earlier the identification and assessment process is carried out, the better, as this allows for the development of Individual Learning Programmes (ILPs) tailored to the needs of each student (Rafikayati & Badiah, 2021). The IEP is crucial in providing educational services for children with special needs in inclusive schools. Through this programme, students' level of ability and development can be assessed, and long-term and short-term goals can be designed to meet their specific needs (Wardah, 2019). The curriculum for students with special needs is developed by modifying the indicators for competency achievement and basic competencies. The responsibility for adjusting these indicators is delegated to educators in each class, so that they can be tailored to the specific needs of the students with special needs they are assisting (Nada, 2022).

According to Sahrudin et al (2023), the purpose of an inclusive school curriculum is to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities (Sahrudin et al., 2023). Many factors, including objectives, resources, learning methods, and assessment, were considered when adapting the Talenta Kindergarten curriculum to meet the needs of children with disabilities. This curriculum, however, must fulfil the Ministry of Education requirements. Teachers must also create and implement a curriculum that supports inclusive learning and allows each child to reach their full potential.

As the B2 inclusion class teacher at Talenta Kindergarten, Miss Mita, stated that:

“The Talenta Kindergarten curriculum is customised to meet the school's and students' needs. As special education and general education curricula are different, the general education curriculum is modified to meet the needs of students with disabilities. When planning activities for students, educators should keep two things in mind: firstly, students' individual needs and interests should be the basis of the development programme materials they use; and secondly, students' physical, mental, social, and emotional growth should be matched to

their chronological age and the developmental phase they are in".

To implement the inclusive curriculum model, Talenta Kindergarten takes several actions, including: I. Identifying children's needs: The first step in implementing an inclusive curriculum model is to determine the needs of children with special needs. Teachers and special education experts work together to conduct the assessment.

- a. Adjustment of learning objectives: Based on the results of identifying needs, learning objectives to meet the needs of children with special needs include adjusting objectives to support children's individual development.
- b. Adjustment of learning materials: learning materials are adjusted to meet children's needs, including making materials easier to understand, using resources to support learning, and providing relevant supplementary materials.
- c. Adjustment of learning processes: learning processes are adapted to children's needs, including new technologies, different teaching methods, and collaborative learning involving children with different ability levels.
- d. evaluation adjustments: during evaluation, the needs of children with special needs are considered, including using various assessments or alternative assessments appropriate to the child's abilities. Inclusive curricula are usually evaluated. To determine the necessary improvements to the child's needs, the child's learning outcomes and the effectiveness of teaching strategies should be evaluated.

Fun and Play Kindergarten uses a modified independent curriculum created by the curriculum team. The curriculum is handed over to the homeroom teacher to be used by the teacher in the learning process. Teachers can adjust the curriculum to the child's abilities and needs, according to the child's characteristics.

As the Fun and Play Kindergarten A1 inclusion class teacher, Miss Nita stated that:

"The principal, deputy curriculum officer, and Fun and Play Kindergarten teachers are responsible for planning and organising the curriculum. The curriculum is adapted to the circumstances and needs of the school and students. In addition, the modified and substitute curriculum models we use are designed to meet the needs and potential of children with disabilities. The standard curriculum is adapted to the abilities and potential of the children with disabilities. Learners with disabilities receive fewer curriculum modifications, while gifted and talented learners receive greater ones".

### ***Organising Educational Learning***

At Talenta Kindergarten, teachers interact with children with different learning styles, learning levels, strengths, weaknesses, potentials, and abilities. To better meet the needs of children with disabilities, teachers must use customised learning strategies (Yunaini, 2021). Learning strategies, materials, learning environments, tools/media, and methods are all part of this customisation. Learning programme plans (RPP) are made to meet the needs and abilities of children with disabilities. As a result, teachers can help children with disabilities improve their abilities and personalities and improve themselves. However, they can also set standards that allow groups of children with disabilities to develop well.

As the B2 inclusion class teacher of Talenta Kindergarten, Miss Maria, stated that:

"To learn about children with special needs, teachers often talk to them about how they learn, their potential, and their weaknesses. Thus, the needs and abilities of children with special needs can be considered when making lesson plans to determine learning objectives. Materials, media, and learning resources should also be considered. Adaptive learning can

improve academic outcomes and enhance children's abilities and personalities".

Inclusive classroom teachers must understand the curriculum and lesson plans that suit children's needs (Prastiwi & Abduh, 2023). The class teacher chooses fun, and Play Kindergarten chooses learning methods. However, teachers must plan materials, media, objectives, and learning resources for children. Learning objectives, materials, and learning resources are adapted to the characteristics of the children. However, learning materials are created by teachers who collect them together before being applied to children during classroom learning.

As the Fun and Play Kindergarten A2 inclusion class teacher, Miss Laras stated that:

"The learning provided to children with disabilities is not in line with the demands of the standard curriculum; however, in the education process, special learning is provided to help them adjust to the education programme. For children with special needs, there is also an individualised learning programme".

### *Communicate Politely, Effectively, and Empathetically*

Teachers with good communication skills are very helpful in instilling multicultural values in inclusive primary schools. This is because their ability to communicate with others is linked to their ability to share those values (Kartikawati et al., 2019). Talenta Kindergarten teachers keep communicating with the children to maintain the cooperation between teachers and children. Teachers communicate actively, politely, and attentively all the time. In addition, teachers must be able to communicate with students from the beginning to the end of class. They should also allow students to voice their opinions or ask questions to help them communicate better.

According to Miss Dian, the inclusion teacher of Talenta B2 Kindergarten, that:

"To communicate with children with special needs, Talenta Kindergarten uses informative, persuasive, and educative communication strategies. The informative element allows teachers to invite children with special needs to talk so that teachers can increase their learning independence. The educative element allows teachers to provide materials to all children, especially children with special needs, first, and then help them with learning tasks in the classroom. The persuasive element allows teachers to understand better how to handle children with special needs".

Social skills help people communicate well, help people adjust and achieve academically at school, and create and strengthen relationships with peers, and create a positive learning environment (Indriawati et al., 2022). At Fun and Play school, social skills are the focused that enables inclusive teachers to interact well with their children. Teachers use engagement to attach to the child and teach them to communicate well at all times. The approach method starts when the child enters the school, where the teacher welcomes the child, asks about the child's condition, and asks about the routine at home. In addition, teachers always ask about children's problems while participating in lessons. In this way, the teacher can change the classroom atmosphere to be more lively, successfully make the classroom environment friendly and easy to understand, and let normal students know that there is a friend with special needs. This increases students' empathy, reduces discrimination, and fosters a sense of helping each other.

As Fun and Play A1 Kindergarten inclusion class teacher, Miss Nita stated:

"Teachers use an educative approach for children with special and general needs and communicate lessons well and effectively. This approach encourages children to ask questions if they face difficulties while learning, which livens the atmosphere and learning environment".



### ***Conduct Evaluation and Assessment in Learning Activities***

The evaluations and assessments conducted by teachers are not solely based on curriculum targets, but rather on the extent to which students have made progress and developed. This means that teachers prioritise the learning process over the outcome. This approach reflects teachers' deep understanding of their students' characteristics, especially those with special needs with intellectual limitations in academic areas. Every improvement, no matter how small, is considered a significant achievement and serves as an indicator of the student's learning success (Putri & Sudarto, 2019).

Observation, anecdotal notes, discussions, tasks, performance, work results, and the creation of self-evaluation instruments are all part of the early childhood education assessment toolkit (Harfiani, R Setiawan, H R, 2019). Teachers at Talenta Kindergarten frequently observe students to identify those who may have special needs. Teachers frequently review portfolios, observation notes, anecdotes, and checklists to check for a child's special needs and other information about the child's growth. Following this, they have consistent, accurate, and frequent conversations with parents about their child's growth, considering any unique requirements the child may have. In addition, evaluation procedures are tailored to the needs of children with disabilities. The criteria for success or evaluation are adjusted to the abilities of the children with disabilities. They should be such that they can measure each child's achievements without causing injustice. Providing continuous feedback to children and educators, TK Talenta conducts formative and summative assessments. Talenta Kindergarten teachers monitor children's development. In addition, children's abilities and achievements are reported and notified to parents.

As the teacher of the B1 inclusion class at Talenta Kindergarten, Miss Klara, stated that:

"Teachers check students' behaviour and development and record the results. Teachers track the behaviour and development of each student from the beginning of the lesson to the end of the lesson, and they record any declines, problems, and progress. Furthermore, the results of the child's records are shared with parents so that parents can monitor the child's activities at home. In addition, teachers and schools use this information to assess. However, teachers also provide a master book, which teachers use to keep assignments. Children will give the work they created to their parents at the end of the term as evidence of their increased level of creativity. In addition, parents, teachers, and others involved can benefit from conducting assessments by teachers on aspects of children's development. Assessments, portfolios, and anecdotal records are some ways to determine the child's development level".

Schools have a customised assessment system for each student, including children with special needs, and the assessment results are the basis for creating and implementing a curriculum that meets the learning needs of each student. Depending on students' abilities, their desired learning outcome indicators, the learning materials needed, and whatever is required for learning, different models and types of assessment can be used to assess children.

As the Fun and Play Kindergarten A2 inclusion class teacher, Miss Laras stated:

"The school's assessment system is tailored to the students' abilities. The assessment system should be thorough and flexible if teachers want to assess students' developmental progress and learning outcomes during the education programme. Assessment results should also be used to create and implement the curriculum. This curriculum allows various sections to fulfil the learning needs of each child. The two types of assessment are tests and non-tests. Tests include performance, oral, objective, and descriptive written tests; non-tests include questionnaires, case studies, portfolios, and checklists".

### ***Developing the Potential of Early Childhood to Self-Actualise Children***

Teachers provide learning tailored to each child's abilities, without pushing them beyond their

limits. In addition, teachers actively accompany the learning process by giving individual attention. Learning activities not only focus on academic aspects, but also include play-based learning activities, such as drawing, colouring, listening to children's songs while dancing, and various other fun activities.

To identify the talents and interests of children with special needs, teachers rely on observing the children's behaviour in their daily lives. If the observations reveal outstanding potential, teachers will guide the children towards those activities first, then provide training in stages.

Talenta Kindergarten teachers see and develop all children's talents by directly utilising children's learning resources. Teachers use fun learning activities to help each child maximise their potential. Teachers determine children's learning tools and resources to fulfil children's needs and potential. Not only do children acquire learning resources and tools that enhance their creativity, but they also have the opportunity to participate in races and competitions that improve their creative abilities. In addition, teachers can provide learning resources that help improve children's abilities and creativity.

As the Talenta Kindergarten B2 inclusion class teacher, Miss Willin stated:

"TK Talenta has identified all children with physical symptoms before accepting new students. So, the results show which children utilise certain limitations or potential. Afterward, teachers also conduct a needs assessment at the beginning of learning to determine the child's potential from learning styles, interests, and other factors. The results of both tests will allow teachers to understand the potential of each child so that they can provide learning resources, facilities, and learning activities according to the child's potential. Thus, teachers can help children to maximise their potential".

Fun and Play Kindergarten teachers identify, check children's intelligence, observe their behaviour, and provide positive support. These activities are to help children with special needs.

As the Fun and Play Kindergarten A1 inclusion class teacher, Miss Nita stated that:

"There are three ways teachers can help develop a child's potential. Firstly, they should discover any talents the child may have and seek specialised help from teachers who know about those talents. Second, they should pay attention to multiple intelligences, the eight intelligences of children. Finally, teachers should instill the belief that all children, including those with special needs, are intelligent. Thirdly, the child can see different activities by looking at the child's behaviour. Teachers can discover which activities make children happy or interesting so that they want to repeat them. Fourth, giving children positive support. Teachers should be able to recognise and praise students' efforts and appreciate them. Making children happy and supporting their interests and talents".

## Discussion

Permendiknas number 16 of 2007 refers to teachers' pedagogic competence, which includes several important elements. Because they have received socialisation from various sources and conducted teacher training, teachers' pedagogical competence at Talenta and Fun and Play Kindergarten is categorised as optimal. Pedagogical expertise is ideal for teachers who can cope with children with special needs in inclusive classrooms. Thus, it can increase the knowledge of children with special needs and develop their development and potential. Teachers at Fun & Play Kindergarten and Talenta Kindergarten have demonstrated a good understanding of pedagogical competencies in dealing with children with special needs (ABK). This is reflected in their ability to recognise students' physical, moral, social, cultural, emotional, and intellectual characteristics. In addition, the teachers have mastered learning theories and educational principles, can design curricula according to their areas of responsibility, and conduct educational learning activities. The teachers also understand how to use information and communication technology in learning. However, the two institutions have different pedagogical competencies, including curriculum creation and assessment systems (Rahman, 2022).

Lestari and Purwanti (2018) argue that pedagogical competence is related to other teacher competencies, such as professional and social competencies. In developing a competency, paying attention to other competencies is also important. Meanwhile, personality competencies tend not to show immediate, tangible development (Athalia & Purwanti, 2025). Schools TK Talenta & TK Fun and Play also provide support to teachers by providing training opportunities so that they can handle children with special needs effectively. However, there are still various obstacles in managing inclusive schools, such as a lack of understanding among teachers about the characteristics of children with special needs, limitations in managing the learning process, and low ability in designing individual education programmes. Therefore, teachers must master concepts about children with special needs, implement inclusive education, and develop appropriate Individual Education Programmes (IEPs) in the school environment (Yunitasari et al., 2024). The following are the pedagogical competencies of inclusive teachers at Talenta Kindergarten and Fun & Play Kindergarten, which refer to the components of the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation, including:

**Table 1.** The Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation

	TK Talenta	TK Fun and Play
Understanding children's characteristics from physical, moral, social, cultural, emotional, and intellectual perspectives	Identify the child's condition by observing physical signs, followed by an evaluation through teacher observation of the child's behaviour, learning style, potential, needs, and development.	Identified children using a list of statements. In addition, teachers also assessed the children's talents, delays, and learning styles.
Understanding learning theories and principles	Teachers strive to integrate play activities with the learning process to support the development of various aspects of children.	Teachers understand the concepts of learning and play theory. The approaches used include the Montessori method, Ki Hajar Dewantara, Reggio Emilia, and Jhe Play.
Developing a curriculum related to the field of development	The curriculum is designed by the characteristics of children with special needs. In addition, the curriculum continues to refer to the standards set by the Ministry of Education.	The independent curriculum that the curriculum team has modified is submitted to the homeroom teacher. Teachers then adjust the curriculum based on the abilities and needs of each child.
Organising educational learning	Strategies, materials, learning environments, media, and learning methods are designed by adjusting the learning process to the conditions and needs of the child.	Learning objectives, materials, and learning resources are tailored to the characteristics of each child.
Communicate politely, effectively, and empathetically	Teachers establish active, polite, and caring communication at all times. Teachers also provide space for children to express their opinions.	Teachers guide children to communicate well and create a friendly classroom atmosphere that is easy for children with special needs to understand.
Conducting evaluations and assessments in learning activities	Assessment of children with special needs is carried out through regular observation by teachers. Success standards or evaluations are tailored to each child's abilities.	Test assessments include performance tests, oral tests, and written tests in the form of objective and essay questions. Meanwhile, non-test assessments include questionnaires, case studies, portfolios, and checklists.

	TK Talenta	TK Fun and Play
Developing the potential of early childhood to actualise children's selves	Teachers observe and optimise the full potential of children through the direct use of learning resources. In addition, teachers design enjoyable learning activities to support each child in developing their abilities to the fullest.	First, teachers identify the talents that children possess. Second, teachers consider the eight types of multiple intelligences. Third, teachers provide opportunities for children to explore various activities. Fourth, teachers provide positive support to children.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The results of the research and discussion on teachers' pedagogical skills at Talenta Kindergarten show that teachers can apply their pedagogical skills in the learning process. They can learn about play theory based on early childhood interests, needs, talents, and potentials, as well as their developmental aspects and stages. Then, they can create activities that are adapted to their development. The pedagogical competence of Talenta Kindergarten and Fun and Play Kindergarten in Semarang City fulfils the Permendikbud guidelines. Based on the results of this study, teachers' pedagogical competence can be improved through participation in training or seminars relevant to the field and by forming discussion forums among teachers. In addition, teachers are also encouraged to regularly reflect on themselves to evaluate and develop their teaching skills in the classroom.

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