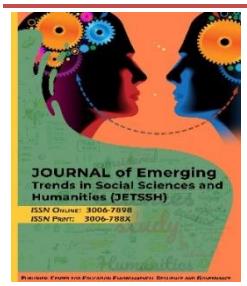


Journal of Emerging Trends in Social Sciences and Humanities

A Double-Blind, Peer-Reviewed, HEC recognized Y-category Research Journal

E-ISSN: 3006-7898 **P-ISSN:** 3006-788X

Volume 3 Issue 3, 2026, 255-270

Parental Perceptions of Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities in Mainstream Schools

Dr. Farzana Jabeen Khoso[1] Rafia Naz Manganhar[2] Mudasir Saeed[3] Iram[4]

[1] Assistant Professor Department of Teacher Education, Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur, Pakistan.

[2] MPhil Education Scholar, Department of Teacher Education, Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur, Pakistan.

[3] MPhil Education Scholar, Department of Teacher Education, Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur, Pakistan.

[4] MPhil Education Scholar, Department of Teacher Education, Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur, Pakistan.

Corresponding Author: Dr. Farzana Jabeen Khoso, **Email:** farzana.khoso@salu.edu.pk

Article Information

Received:

2026-06-24

Revised:

2026-07-29

Accepted:

2026-08-16

Keywords

Inclusive Education;
Children with Disabilities;
Parental Perceptions;
Mainstream Schools;
Educational Inclusion.

ABSTRACT

Academic inclusion promised equal access, inclusion, and dignity to children with disabilities, yet parents gauged it by the actual quality of school practice. This research involved the study of how parents view inclusive education of children with disabilities in normal schools. It explored parental perceptions of inclusion, their attachment to inclusion benefits, and how their anxieties affected their attitudes toward or reservations about mainstream placement. It was a qualitative method. The data collection of 24 semi-structured interviews with parents and primary caregivers of children with various disabilities attending normal mainstream schools were used. Thematic analysis presented in the interview data was used to find meanings, concerns, and patterns that were repetitive yet present in all the participants. Parents used to support the idea of inclusive education though they usually were conditional. They appreciated peer contact, confidence, equality, and social engagement. Nevertheless, they also voiced serious concerns regarding training of teachers, accessibility of classes, learning facilities, school bullying, emotional safety, transportation strains, and poor school-family communication. The researchers concluded that parental reluctance to inclusion should not be considered a rejection. Rather, it was practical deficiencies related to practice largely due to the failure of mainstream schools to offer support, safety, respect, and individualized learning opportunities in the ordinary classroom experiences as well as school-family relations, both over time.

© 2026 by the authors. Licensee Khoso, Manganhar, Saeed & Iram. This article is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Publisher: **Institute for Educating Environmental Resilience and Governance**

1. Introduction

Inclusive education is one of the most powerful policy promises in modern schooling as it relates the right to receive education with the right to belong. International regimes have shifted education systems to not just focus on a limited placement model, but to an expectation that regular schools should de-barrier, accommodate teaching and help all learners with disabilities get the full benefit (UNESCO, 1994; United Nations, 2006; UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). The 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report further claims that inclusion needs to go beyond the idea of ability, poverty, language, gender, and location and provide opportunities instead of treating disability as a single category (UNESCO, 2020). Ainscow (2020) also puts inclusion as a process at the system level in terms of identification and elimination of obstacles to participation. Nevertheless, the actuality of inclusion is disproportional. A large number of school systems allow children with disabilities to attend mainstream schools but still subject them to the inaccessibility of classrooms, low instructional adaptation, social isolation, or low expectations. Parental perception is an object of great interest in inclusive schooling today due to this discrepancy between policy promise and teacher practice.

The role of parents in inclusive education is unique. They monitor the academic, emotional, peer relationships, transport burden and day to day adjustment that is not evident to schools. Their feelings are not simply related to personal preference; they offer the evidence of whether inclusion is operating as meaningful or participation or is working as mere physical admittance. Empirical studies and reviews demonstrate that parents tend to endorse the moral principle of inclusion, concomitantly airing apprehensions regarding teacher preparation, individual assistance, resources, bullying, as well as curriculum accessibility (de Boer et al., 2010; Leyser and Kirk, 2004; Stevens and Wurf, 2020). This ambivalence must not be taken to mean refusal to be included. Instead, it demonstrates how families do perceive inclusion in an action-based sense: a child is really included when the school can offer access to learning, respectful relations, and a supportive environment that corresponds with the needs of a child.

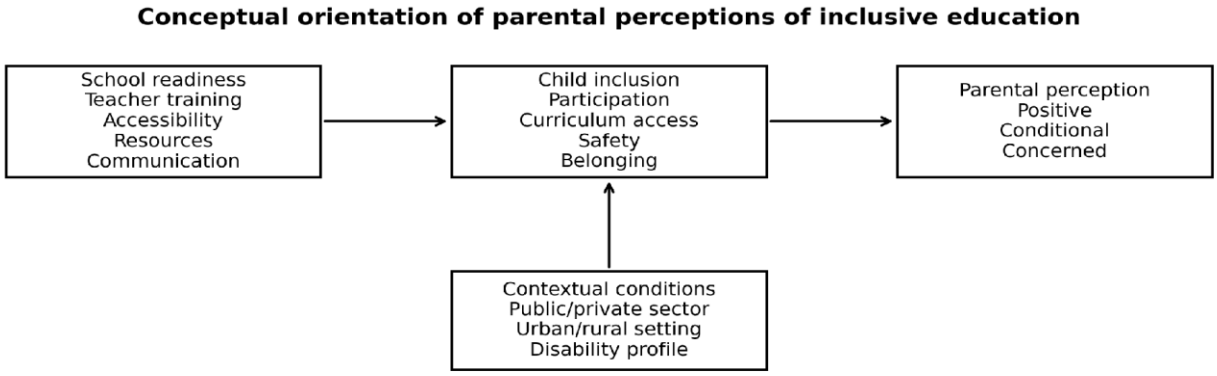
Tension is particularly apparent in low- and middle-income or resource-constrained situations where education-inclusive policies might be implemented more rapidly than the schools could develop their capacity. A study by Singal (2016) in rural India proved that the attitudes of parents to the schooling of children with disabilities were based on poverty, distance, institutional positions and ambiguity about the potential ability of schools to offer good education. In Kenya, Carew et al. (2019) demonstrated that teacher preparedness can be enhanced, with specific intervention; nonetheless, the authors emphasized that converting inclusive values into the classroom as a habitual practice is quite challenging. It is also suggested in Pakistan-based evidence that parents can possess an interest in inclusive education but be dissatisfied with the quality of teaching and learning, institutional responses and support offered to children with disabilities (Khalid et al., 2021). Such results indicate that quality of implementation, and not just the abstract concept of inclusion, is sensitive to parental perceptions. They also suggest that the unwillingness of a parent may be a rational evaluation of risk when the school promises are not accompanied by available buildings, one-to-one instruction, assistive resources and regular teacher attention.

Another justification to learn parental perceptions is that inclusive education is multidimensional. There is an interplay between social participation and academic, physical, emotional, and family-school communication. The lack of parental trust can thus be compromised by a single barrier that has not been resolved e.g. inaccessible printed material, untrained teachers, unsafe peer interactions, or insufficient transport. Trust, on the other hand, can be enhanced by having the schools show their practical willingness as individually planned, assistive resources, patient teacher, and frequent communication. Research conducted in Bhutan and Singapore concluded that parents appreciated social inclusion and involvement in school, and were worried about insufficient resources and lack of expert care (Jigyel et al., 2020; Wong et al., 2015). More recent research has also highlighted that inclusive planning should be informed by parent input since they can point to the barriers to inclusion that are often not apparent or identified by formal school policies

(Benson et al., 2024; Sharma et al., 2022). This implies that parental perception is supposed to be handled as a design tool to enhance schools, rather than being readily perceived as one variable to be handled. By disregarding family experience in their design, schools face the possibility of creating support structures that revolve around the free convenience of the administration instead of the real barriers, routines, strengths and emotional responses of the child.

Although this is an increasing evidence base, there are three gaps. To begin with, much of the literature considers parental attitude to be general positive or negative orientation, which conceals the conditional reasoning of the parental judgments. Second, academic, social, emotional and resource issues have been separated in many studies when families encounter them jointly in their everyday schooling. Third, context-sensitive qualitative studies are warranted to explore the concept of successful inclusion in mainstream schools with heterogeneous disability backgrounds as defined by parents. The current research addressed these gaps and reflected on the parental perception of inclusive education of children with disabilities in regular schools. The research was supported by the perception that inclusion must be assessed with the help of participation, support, safety, and dignity as opposed to enrolment per se. It inquired about the parental perception of inclusive education, the perceived advantages and what parents feared about mainstream placement, and what school conditions influenced parental support or reluctance to support this school placement. By performing this, the research placed the parents as well versed witnesses of the quality of day to day practice inclusive and as the collaborators in the process of finding out what mainstream schools should do to truly become inclusive in the actual classrooms. Its value is that it clarifies that the support of inclusion by parents can be perceived as more practice-sensitive than unconditional acceptance.

Figure 1: *Conceptual Orientation of Parental Perceptions of Inclusive Education*



2. Literature Review

Evidence-based studies have always indicated a positive yet conditional perception of inclusive education by parents. Late survey studies indicated that parents appreciated inclusive placement when it enhanced social acceptance and equality of opportunities, but when the concerns increased in the event that the teachers were not trained or when the children needed more support, the parents were more apprehensive (Luyser and Kirk 2004). The same was found by Palmer et al. (2001), who reported that the parents of children with severe disabilities assumed various roles regarding inclusion based on the support needs of their children and the school experiences. As Duhaney and Salend (2000) demonstrated, opinions of parents were determined by perceived efficacy of the services, professional interaction and the fit between the placement and the individual need. These experiments defined one fundamental rule that would be later researched: parents do not evaluate inclusion on abstract ideological grounds: they evaluate it on the tangible basis of the quality of educational services.

The pattern of contingency is strengthened by

research relating to early childhood and primary settings. Swick and Hooks (2005) discovered that parents advocated an inclusive placement when they felt collaborative and responsive as well as being respected by educators. According to Rafferty, Boettcher and Griffin (2001), parents admitted to social gains of inclusion in preschool set-up but expressed concerns about safety, attention as well as ability of the teachers to cater to various developmental needs. Investigating the struggles of parents involved in securing mainstream schooling access with children with learning problems, Kenny, Shevlin, Walsh, and McNeela (2005) raised the question that formal access might not eliminate the negotiating-support burden. A similar conclusion was provided by Rogers (2007): parents and children were able to experience a sense of inclusivity to schooling as emotionally challenging when schools did not manage to provide responses to the issues of stigma and identity along with the common sense of difference.

Experiments specially dedicated to particular disability groups also indicate why parental perceptions could not be narrow-minded down to approval or disapproval. According to Whitaker (2007), the parents of the young individuals with the autism spectrum disorder valued mainstream education where the staff members knew autism and could plan around it; however, they desired more specialized knowledge, predictability, and communication. Hotulainen and Takala (2014) discovered that among Finnish parents, the perceived success of integration hinged on the difference between perceived and real importance, notably what parents thought was important and what parents experienced in school practice. Poon-McBrayer and McBrayer (2013) based in Hong Kong demonstrated that in many instances parents in situations where children experienced specific learning difficulties needed to rally support outside of school due to inadequate formal support provision. A similar study by Lui, Yang, and Sin (2017) also established that school practices influenced how students with special educational needs opera, which is why parent-school relationship was a key accountable channel in which inclusion was achieved or failed. This literature demonstrates that parental confidence is enhanced when schools mediate professional knowledge into perceptible changes which families can see. This same evidence also indicates that there is also a fragility in parent satisfaction when parental support is based on the personal teacher goodwill instead of a structured school.

Asian and low resource evidence has provided valuable perspective. Wong, Poon, Kaur, and Ng (2015) discovered that Singaporean parents perceived positive opportunities of inclusive education but feared social acceptance, resources, and staffing. In rural India, Singal (2016) showed that the experiences of parents were significantly influenced by the level of poverty, the distance, the attitude of schools, and the perceived importance of child education with disability. Jigyel, Miller, Mavropoulou, and Berman (2020) discovered that inclusive schooling resulted in social and care-related gains among Bhutanese parents, although parents were still worried about bullying, behaviour management, and poor academic learning. Khalid, Malik, and Asghar (2021) also found the same uncertainty in Punjab, with parents being interested in inclusion but being unsatisfied with the quality of instruction and institutional assistance. A compilation of these studies suggests that school parental confidence is a key factor to whether schools can convert policy into secure day-to-day support. They also demonstrate that it is not only the academic provision which is influenced by resource constraints; it has impacts on family trust and child attendance, and also the perceived legitimacy of mainstream placement.

Empirical studies done recently have taken this debate a step further by quantifying inclusive climate and focusing on parent voice. Sharma, Woodcock, May, and Subban (2022) worked out and experimented a measure of parental perception of the inclusive education climate in terms of teacher practice and school support as quantifiable aspects of parental experiences and as predictors of the perceived implementation quality. The SOFIA tool was developed by Sanchez-Pujalte, Gomez-Dominguez, Soto-Rubio, and Navarro-Mateu (2020) in Spain to determine whether or not the schools were actually helping support children with special educational needs. The mixed-method research by Stevens and Wurf (2020) in Australian primary schools reported widespread positive attitudes but also the issues related to the lack of necessary

resources and the ability of teachers. In a study by Tryfon, Anastasia, and Eleni (2021), the benefits of inclusion were appreciated by Greek parents of children with intellectual disabilities, but inclusion was perceived to be inadequate where mainstream schools had no materials, training, or individualized assistance. A similar conclusion was made in the study of the experience of parents with children with intellectual disabilities by Yazicioglu and Sumer Dodur (2023): parents would prefer it to be more participative, yet they need practical support that their children would not be left unprotected, uneducated, and unrespected.

These empirical studies bring out two cross-cutting themes. The initial one is teacher preparedness. Teacher patience, differentiated instruction, behavioural understanding and classroom adaptation are repeatedly cited as the crucial conditions leading to successful inclusion by parents. Carew, Deluca, Groce, and Kett (2019) confirm this focus, demonstrating that targeted teacher training enhanced inclusive attitudes and self-efficacy in Kenya, although classroom practice continued to be more complicated to change. The second theme is the partnership. Benson, Al-Natour, and Hussein Diaa (2024) demonstrate that the input of parents could influence inclusive education by revealing pragmatic barriers and solution areas that the school might overlook. Social-emotional safety is a third theme. In any situation, parents appreciate peer interaction, but are very vigilant about bullying, naming, embarrassment, and losing confidence by the child. Thus, mainstream placement will be okay when accompanied by adult supervision, peer sensitization, individualized learning support, and frequent communication. Such conditions are significant in all disability types, but according to families of children with intellectual, autism-related or multiple disabilities, there are more concerns regarding behavioural support and curriculum modification. In any context, the most effective parental perceptions are achieved through regular school communication, family respect, and turning inclusive ideals into observable accommodations. It is an important trend as it reframes parental concern as a production of diagnostic data on implementation quality, rather than a barrier to reform. It is strongly recommended in literature that qualitative exploration of the meaning of mainstream inclusion is achieved within the interconnected frames of access, support, safety, belonging and academic progress in real day-to-day school life.

Table 1: *Selected Empirical Studies Informing the Literature Review*

Study	Context / Method	Contribution to the Present Study
Leyser & Kirk (2004)	United States; parent survey	Parent views depended on child need, teacher readiness, and perceived social benefits.
Palmer et al. (2001)	Parents of children with severe disabilities	Parents differed on inclusion depending on support intensity and prior placement experience.
Duhaney & Salend (2000)	Parent perceptions of placement	Communication, service quality, and individualized support shaped satisfaction.
Swick & Hooks (2005)	Early childhood placements	Collaboration and respect strengthened parent confidence in inclusion.
Rafferty et al. (2001)	Preschool reverse inclusion	Parents recognized social gains but worried about attention, safety, and service adequacy.
Kenny et al. (2005)	Ireland; learning difficulties	Accessing mainstream provision required persistent parental negotiation.
Rogers (2007)	United Kingdom; parent and child experience	Inclusive schooling could be emotionally difficult when stigma was not addressed.
Whitaker (2007)	Autism in mainstream schools	Parents wanted autism-informed routines, specialist knowledge, and consistent

Study	Context / Method	Contribution to the Present Study
		communication.
Hotulainen & Takala (2014)	Finland; N = 219 parents	Success was linked to the gap between parental priorities and actual school experience.
Poon-McBrayer & McBrayer (2013)	Hong Kong; specific learning difficulties	Families often sought support beyond school when formal provision was weak.
Wong et al. (2015)	Singapore; parental perspectives	Parents valued inclusion but questioned resources, acceptance, and staff capacity.
Singal (2016)	Rural India; parental experiences	Schooling decisions were shaped by poverty, distance, and school attitudes.
Lui et al. (2017)	Hong Kong; school practices	School practices influenced the functioning of students with special educational needs.
Jigyel et al. (2020)	Bhutan; 26 parents	Parents reported social/care benefits but concerns about bullying and weak learning.
Stevens & Wurf (2020)	Australia; mixed methods	Parents generally supported inclusion but raised concerns over resources and teacher capacity.
Khalid et al. (2021)	Punjab; qualitative interviews	Parents were inclined toward inclusion but uncertain about instruction and institutional support.
Tryfon et al. (2021)	Greece; intellectual disabilities	Parents valued inclusion yet questioned mainstream readiness.
Sharma et al. (2022)	Scale validation; inclusive climate	Teacher practice and school support emerged as measurable dimensions of parental perception.
Yazıcıoğlu & Sümer Dodur (2023)	Parental experiences; intellectual disabilities	Parents required safety, teaching, and respect for inclusion to be meaningful.
Benson et al. (2024)	Parent input study	Parent voice identified practical barriers and solutions for inclusive planning.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design because the purpose was to understand parental perceptions, experiences, and concerns about inclusive education in mainstream schools. The qualitative method was deemed appropriate as the parents were able to elaborate on the aspect of inclusion as it was practiced in day-to-day life in school and not merely give fixed responses in surveys. It also got a realistic understanding of placement in real-life classes and family activity.

Participants and Sampling

The participants were 24 parents and primary caregivers of children with disabilities who were studying in mainstream schools. This sample consisted of 14 mothers, 9 fathers and one grandmother. Ages of children were 6–13 years and attended mainstream schools on average of approximately two years. Purposive selection was used to have varied contexts of schools and disability profiles. The sample was used to represent both the public schools and the private schools, children with physical disability, autism spectrum disorder, learning disability, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, visual impairment and multiple disabilities.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The reason behind adopting this approach was that the researcher needed to have a clear direction of the interview to take and at the same time submit the participants an opportunity

to narrate their own experience in detail. Interview questions centered on knowledge of inclusive education and perceived advantages of mainstream learning, parent's worries about school readiness, teacher support, classroom access, peer acceptance, emotional security, communication with school personnel, and the reality of transport, cost and time. The interviews were held in a respectful way such that the interviewees could freely relate about the good and bad things.

Data Analysis

The interview data were analyzed through thematic analysis. The preliminary stage was to go through the responses to get the general meaning of the data. Next, ideas and important statements were repeated and coded. Themes found during the coding procedure included the desire to prefer mainstream placement with support, physical accessibility and learning materials, conditional inclusion support, teacher training and individual support, security and emotional wellbeing, stigmas and bullying, school communication, peer belonging, academic gains and family burdensome conditions. A simple coding scale indicated the absence, minor or major of each theme in each interview.

Ethical Considerations

This research ensured the privacy and dignity of participants. Participating was under voluntariness and the information given by parents was confidential. The results were presented in a grouped format in which no individual participants and children were identified. This approach thus assisted the research to get actual experiences of parents and inclusion as a practical inclusion and not just a mere admission.

Results

This part of the paper will offer the results of the 24 semi-structured interviews with parents and primary-caregivers about the issue of inclusive education to children with disabilities in a regular school. The analytic corpus consisted of mothers (n=14), fathers (n=9) and one grandmother. Participants had a representation of public (n=15) and private (n=9) school situations, with children between the ages of 6 to 13 years. The disability profile was deliberately diverse: the most popular was physical disability (n = 5), then, the autism spectrum disorder (n = 4), learning disability (n = 4), hearing impairment: (n = 3), intellectual disability: (n = 3), visual impairment: (n = 3) and multiple disabilities: (n = 2). The mean age of parents was 38.46 years and children had attended mainstream school on average 2.08 years. Table 1 is a summary of the participant and child background characteristics in a manner to contextualize the thematic interpretation.

Table 1: *Participant and Child Background Summary*

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Parent relationship	Mother	14	58.3
Parent relationship	Father	9	37.5
Parent relationship	Grandmother	1	4.2
Residence	Urban	12	50.0
Residence	Semi-urban	7	29.2
Residence	Rural	5	20.8
School sector	Public	15	62.5
School sector	Private	9	37.5
Child gender	Male	13	54.2
Child gender	Female	11	45.8
Disability type	Physical disability	5	20.8
Disability type	Autism Spectrum Disorder	4	16.7

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Disability type	Learning disability	4	16.7
Disability type	Hearing impairment	3	12.5
Disability type	Intellectual disability	3	12.5
Disability type	Visual impairment	3	12.5
Disability type	Multiple disabilities	2	8.3
Overall perception	Mostly negative	10	41.7
Overall perception	Mixed/conditional	7	29.2
Overall perception	Mostly positive	7	29.2

Note. *Percentages are based on N = 24. Categories are presented as descriptive frequencies.*

Overall, the results show that parents did not reject inclusive education as a principle. Instead, they were conditional upon the ability of mainstream schools to offer meaningful participation, learning opportunities, accessible learning environments, and emotionally secure classrooms. 24 respondents spoke of inclusion as being beyond physical placement in a mainstream classroom. In the narrative, inclusion implied being able to study with peers, receive specialized classes, to be respected not only by their teachers, but also by peers, and to get some practical assistance through seating arrangements, ramps, assistive technology, or extra instructional time. This difference between admission and participation determined almost all the themes in the analysis and the interpretive lens with which parents evaluated school readiness.

The themes coding indicated that there are eleven common themes (Table 2). The most eminent tendency was mainstream placement with support, which all respondents mentioned and which was a key theme in 22 interviews. Conditional support of inclusion was also very universal with 18 key mentions and had average intensity of 1.75 on the 0-2 code scale. Parents thus appreciated mainstream schooling albeit not without conditions. One common stance was that mainstream schooling was acceptable when the school was able to customize routines, minimize stigmatization and offer personalized nurture. A parent of a child with autism said, "It is a great idea, but it is a combination of routine, noises and patience of the teacher that makes the difference. This quote indicates the main conclusion: acceptance should occur in terms of parental inclination to perceive inclusion as an approved educational process, not the symbolic enrollment.

Table 2: *Main Themes Identified from Parent Interviews*

Theme	Mentioned, n (%)	Major Mentions, n	Mean Intensity
Preference for mainstream placement with support	24 (100.0)	22	1.92
Physical accessibility and learning resources	24 (100.0)	19	1.79
Conditional support for inclusion	24 (100.0)	18	1.75
Teacher training and individual support	24 (100.0)	17	1.71
Safety, confidence, and emotional wellbeing	24 (100.0)	15	1.62
Stigma, bullying, and negative attitudes	21 (87.5)	17	1.58
School communication and parental involvement	24 (100.0)	9	1.38
Peer acceptance and social belonging	24 (100.0)	6	1.25
Academic progress and curriculum access	22 (91.7)	7	1.21

Theme	Mentioned, n (%)	Major Mentions, n	Mean Intensity
Costs, transport, and time burden	17 (70.8)	11	1.17
Preference for special/resource class where support is weak	9 (37.5)	5	0.58

Note. *Coding scale: 0 = absent, 1 = minor/implicit, and 2 = major/explicit.*

The profile of the study is provided in Figure 1, whereas Figure 2 demonstrates the proportion of the greatest themes in terms of their salience. The most concerned-related theme was resource and accessibility concerns. All participants brought up physical access and learning resources that were proposed 19 times and had a mean intensity equal to 1.79. When talking about ramps, movement in classrooms, printed materials, hearing assistance, and assistive technology, parents of physically, visually and hearing impaired children emphasized these elements. These anxieties were not far-fetched grievances; they had something to do with the practical obstacles that might leave a child behind even when he or she had been enrolled in a traditional school. One of the parents of a child with visual impairment said, "I am a supporter of mainstream school, yet, printing the text material and moving around the classroom is a daily problem.

Figure 1. *Participant Profile by Residence, School Sector, and Disability Category*

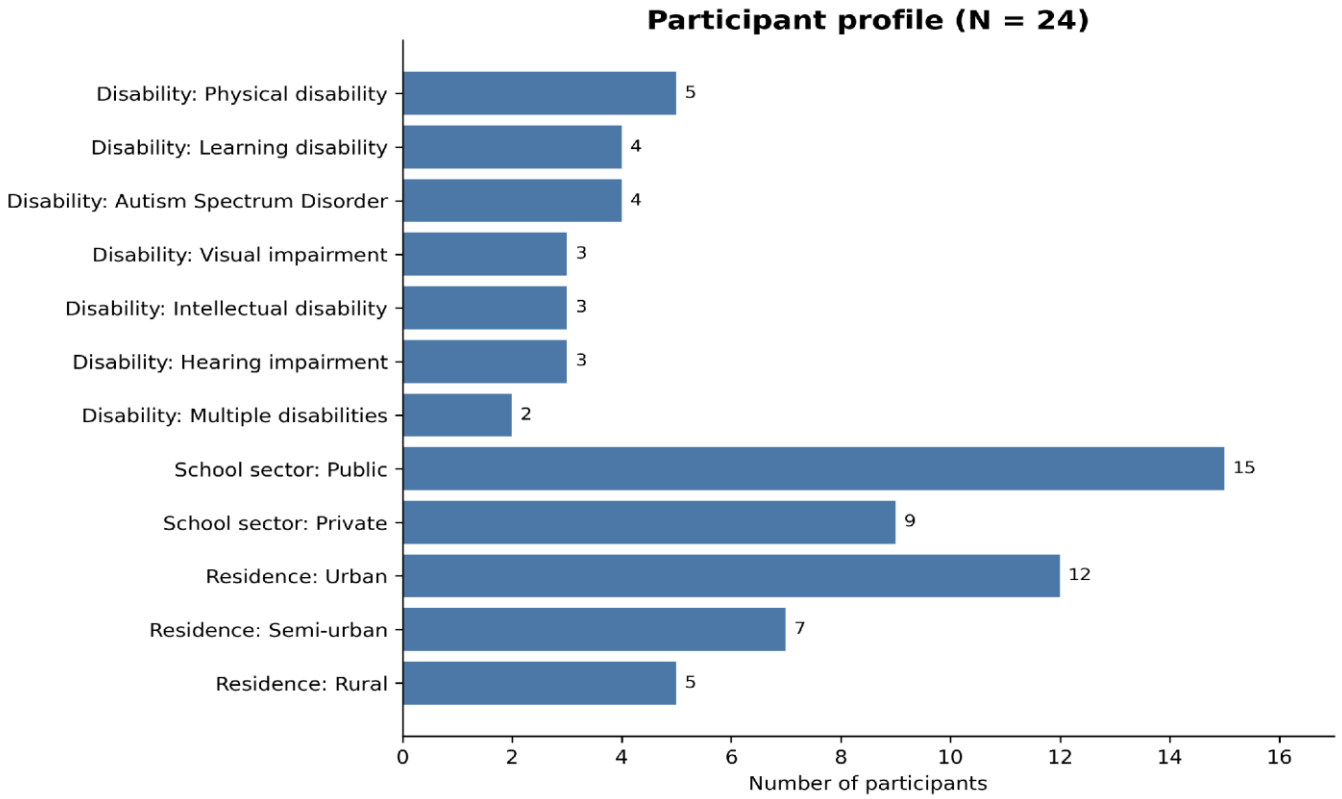
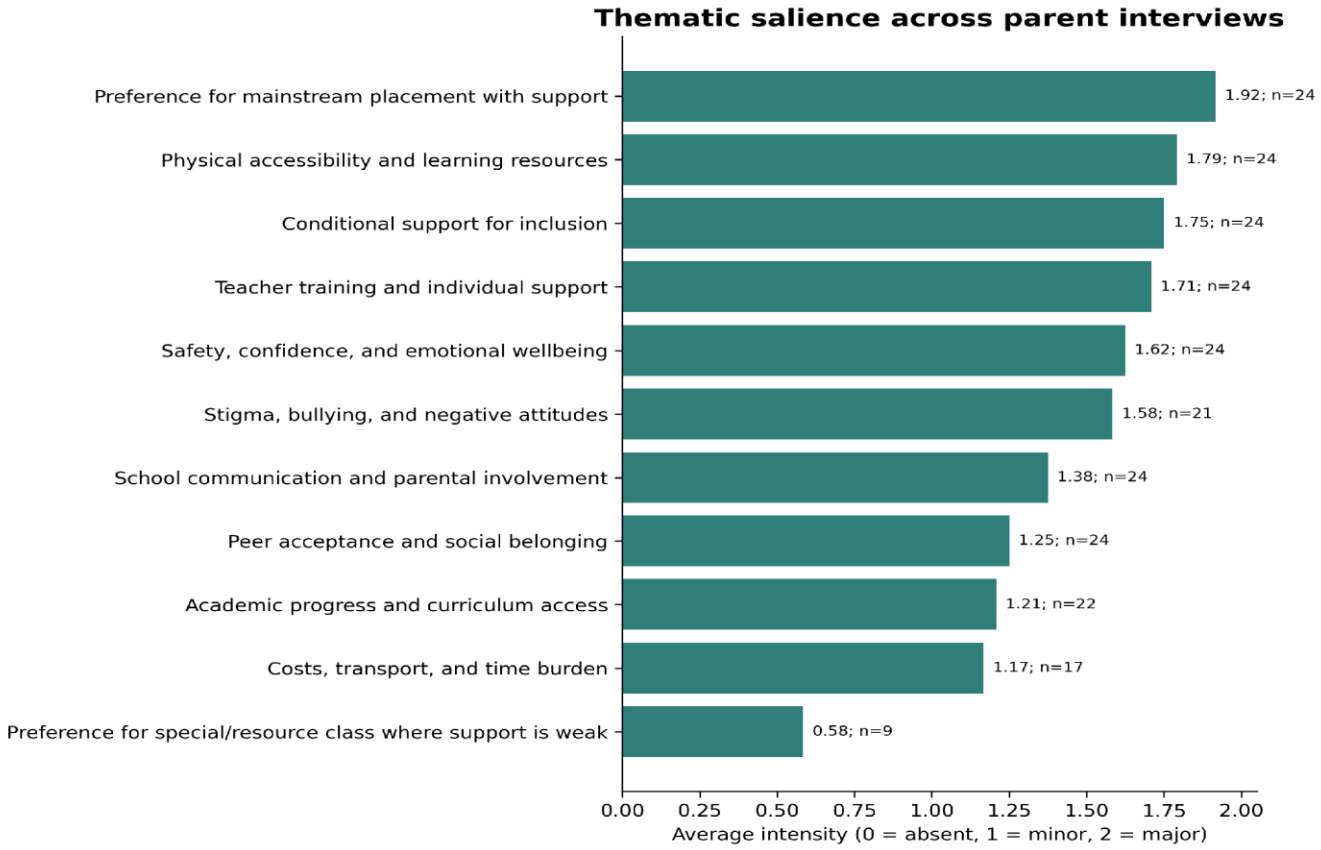


Figure 2. *Average Thematic Intensity Across Parent Interviews*



Teacher preparedness was another dominant theme, mentioned by all participants and coded as major in 17 interviews. Parents referred again and again to patience of teachers, training and pacing, and adaptive lesson pacing as successful inclusion factors. This theme overlapped with academic advancement and access to curriculum in that it was used in 22 interviews. When teachers provided more time, gave simplified instructions or did not embarrass parents in front of others, parents were good with mainstream learning. Academic pressure was however a problem where lessons were not paced or the teachers did not have a plan of how to deal with intellectual disability, autism or learning disability. In this way, academic advantage had been implicated but with less strength compared to the issues of support and resources.

All the participants mentioned social belonging, but it was coded as a major theme in six interviews. This trend suggests that parents widely appreciated interaction with peers and faith in them and the integrity of studying with other kids, yet regarded social exposure as a factor by itself. The 21 participants mentioned stigma, bullying, negative attitudes which were coded as major in 17 interviews which revealed that peer acceptance was weak and there was a need to supervise it by an adult. Safety, confidence, emotional wellbeing was also universal, making 15 mega mentions. Parents thus became critical of mainstream schooling both aesthetically and academically.

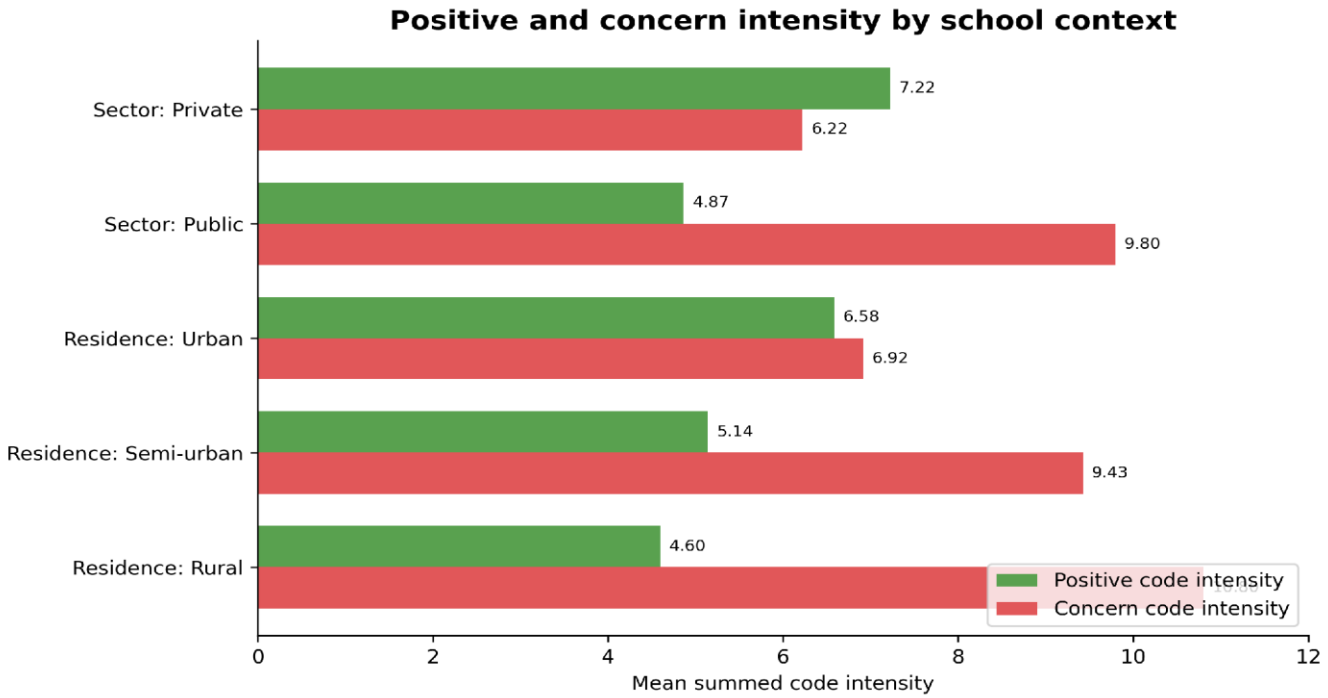
The pattern of subgroups enhanced this interpretation. The parents of public schools had lower intensity of positive codes (M=4.87) and higher intensity of concern (M=9.80) as compared to that of the parents of their peers (M=7.22 and 6.22 in that order). The best concern intensity was registered by the rural parents (M = 10.80) compared to the semi-urban parents (M = 9.43), and urban parents registered the lowest concern intensity (M = 6.92). These differences are shown in figure 3. Disability-related patterns also were important: the more difficult mainstream provision, the stronger parents of intellectually and multiple-disabled children desiring special or resource-class support, and the more favorable mainstream placement was preferred by parents of physically, visually, hearing, and learning disabled children where such provision and support was available.

Table 3. *Perception Intensity by School Context and Overall Perception*

Grouping	Category	N	Positive Intensity M (SD)	Concern Intensity M (SD)	Mainstream Support M	Teacher/ Resource Concern M
School sector	Private	9	7.22 (0.83)	6.22 (1.92)	2.00	1.33
School sector	Public	15	4.87 (0.83)	9.80 (1.90)	1.87	2.00
Residence	Rural	5	4.60 (0.89)	10.80 (1.30)	1.80	2.00
Residence	Semi-urban	7	5.14 (1.21)	9.43 (1.51)	1.86	1.93
Residence	Urban	12	6.58 (1.24)	6.92 (2.50)	2.00	1.54
Overall perception	Mixed/conditional	7	5.71 (0.76)	8.57 (0.79)	2.00	1.79
Overall perception	Mostly negative	10	4.60 (0.84)	10.80 (0.92)	1.80	2.00
Overall perception	Mostly positive	7	7.43 (0.79)	5.00 (0.58)	2.00	1.36

Note. Positive and concern intensities are summed descriptive indices from the coding matrix. M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

Figure 3. *Positive and Concern Code Intensity by School Sector and Residence.*



The perception profile in general was thus ambivalent. Seven of them were coded as mostly positive, seven coded as mixed or conditional, and ten coded as mostly negative. But the negative classification did not represent any opposition to inclusion, per se. It was a criticism of the lack of preparedness of existing mainstream schools. Parents indicated support of inclusive education most in the data set where teacher training, accessibility, parental communication, safety and individualized academic support could be observed in day-to-day school practice. These findings suggest that the perceptions of parents were rights based but sensitive to practice: parents desired mainstream inclusion, but they would assess it based on the quality of the implementation as seen by their child.

Discussion

Principal Findings

The results show that the parents perceived inclusive education as an attractive unfinished

project. Their testimonies affirmed the moral and social intent of mainstream schooling for the disabled and they objected to a thin model of inclusion that did not allow much more than enrolment. Conditional acceptance was the main result: parents desired that their children should study in classes, develop self-confidence, and not get socially isolated but they demanded schools to offer trained educators, classrooms available, assistive materials, emotional safety, and direct communication. This interpretation aligns with Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which views inclusive education as the right to receive quality schooling, but not just physical access to general schools (United Nations, 2006; UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

Comparison with Prior Research

The results show that the parents perceived inclusive education as an attractive unfinished project. Their testimonies affirmed the moral and social intent of mainstream schooling for the disabled and they objected to a thin model of inclusion that did not allow much more than enrolment. Conditional acceptance was the main result: parents desired that their children should study in classes, develop self-confidence, and not get socially isolated but they demanded schools to offer trained educators, classrooms available, assistive materials, emotional safety, and direct communication. This interpretation aligns with Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which views inclusive education as the right to receive quality schooling, but not just physical access to general schools (United Nations, 2006; UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

Comparison Against the Previous Research

The trend is corresponding to the worldwide literature on inclusive education as well. The review by De Boer et al. (2010) revealed that results among parents were broadly positive on the issue of inclusive education however different opinions on the issue were recorded based on the needs of the children, the quality of the school, and social aspects of participating in the education. In the same way, Stevens and Wurf (2020) demonstrated that the attitudes of parents in Australian primary schools did not have a consistent positive or a negative attitude; parents enjoyed inclusion but cared about the capacity of the teachers and classroom situations. The present results add a qualitative explanation for this ambivalence. The fears expressed by parents were not that they resisted inclusion because of some ideological reason: they were judgments which are practical and decide whether schools had the resources to render inclusion safe, academically meaningful, and socially respectful.

The greatest empirical coming in deposit entails teacher preparedness and individualized assistance. In this research, teacher training or personal encouragement were said by all of the participants, 17 of whom considered it one of the critical issues. This is similar to Carew et al. (2019), whose Kenyan intervention study asserted the preparation of teachers led to better inclusive self-efficacy and attitudes, but greater resistance to classroom practice. The same distinction was made in the current research: a facilitating attitude on the part of teachers was valued, but not sufficient where lessons were too speedy, instructions too difficult to understand, and support plans were too haphazard. The implication is obvious: the area of professional development should shift beyond the level of the awareness workshops to the practical training in the area of differentiated instruction, behaviour support as well as assistive technology and classroom assessment, along with collaboration with families.

The results of the resources and accessibility are also aligned with the findings of low and middle-income and emerging school systems. A study by Singal (2016) revealed that in rural India, parents' experiences of schooling children with disabilities were influenced by poverty, distance, and constraints in the schools. In a qualitative study conducted in Punjab by Khhalid et al. (2021), parents, as well, favored inclusive education, but expressed their doubts where the quality of education was lower and where the school stimulated them to do so. The identical tension can be observed in the current dataset. The earliest mainstream placement was supported by parents but was associated with ramps, seating, transport, readable materials, hearing support, and access to specialists. This implies that inclusion policies will never be taken as confident by the parents unless infrastructure and learning resources are considered as fundamental educational rights.

The social results make it difficult to assume that the mainstream placement inevitably leads to the sense of belonging. Peer contact was also appreciated by the parents, as well as stigma, bullying, and negative attitudes. It helps to justify the scoping review of the parent perspectives toward the student with intellectual disability by Shurr et al. (2023), which stresses that parents tend to evaluate inclusion in both terms of participation and the quality of the support received. Tryfon and others (2021) and Yazıcinoğlu and Sümer Dodur (2023) had results that also indicated that parents found inclusion valuable, but they doubted its efficacy in the context of mainstream schools not having the proper resources. In the current study, parents of intellectually and multiple disability children had higher chances of considering special or resource-class support when mainstream provision was feeble. This does not undermine the agenda of inclusion; that it demonstrates inclusive systems should have flexible support without enrolling the children to unsupported classrooms.

Implications for Policy and Practice

A number of practical implications arise. To begin with, school leaders need to establish formal parent school communication networks instead of informal teacher goodwill. Second, budgetary planning must consist of individual learning plans, documented accommodations and frequent review meetings. Third, classroom coaching and the measurement of practices that relate to teacher training should be interconnected. Fourth, the physical access, learning materials, assistive technology, transport and safety procedures should be covered by the accessibility audits. Fifth, anti-bullying and peer-sensitization interventions must be a part-and-parcel of mainstream schools, since social belonging has to be actively developed. These measures would bring schools nearer to such Salamanca principle as ordinary schools need to accommodate all children using child-centred pedagogy (UNESCO, 1994) as well as the UNESCO (2020) finding that inclusion means eliminating obstacles to children who are part of minority groups in terms of backgrounds or abilities. It also justifies new ideas about considering parent input as not simply an overlooked design resource but a vital one (Benson et al., 2024).

Limitations

There are limitations of the study. There was a small and qualitative sample and the results cannot be statistically and sufficiently used to say anything about all parents of children with disabilities. The categories of disability were varied, yet some of the subgroups are very limited such as multiple disabilities. The coding intensity scores were helpful in sorting the patterns but should be taken to be descriptive thematic indicators but not psychometric measures. Parent reports also formed the basis of the study and future research must place parent interviews on a par with teacher interviews, classroom observation, perspectives of children and policy documents of the school.

Conclusion

Finally, the research demonstrates that the opinions of parents concerning inclusive education were optimistic yet challenging. They desired to have their children enjoy mainstream education, peer inclusion, self-esteem, and equal human rights. Nevertheless, they had to be supported with actual implementation: educators had to be trained, provided with resources, given emotional security, given one-on-one academic assistance, and have control and respectful communication. The primary contribution of the study is demonstrating that parental hesitation should not be interpreted as opposition to inclusion. Families know what it means to be in a classroom and what it means to be included.

Conflict of Interest

The authors showed no conflict of interest.

Funding

The authors did not mention any funding for this research.

References

Benson, S., Al-Natour, M., & Hussein Diaa, M. (2024). Parent input: shaping inclusive education for students with disabilities. *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities*, *70*(6), 1102-1111. https://doi.org/10.1080/20473869.2024.2381909

Carew, M. T., Deluca, M., Groce, N., & Kett, M. (2019). The impact of an inclusive education intervention on teacher preparedness to educate children with disabilities within the Lakes Region of Kenya. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *23*(3), 229-244. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1430181

de Boer, A., Pijl, S. J., & Minnaert, A. (2010). Attitudes of parents towards inclusive education: A review of the literature. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, *25*(2), 165-181. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856251003658694

Khalid, L., Malik, S., & Asghar, M. Z. (2021). Inclusive practices in the existing school environment: Parental perceptions and concerns. *Sustainable Business and Society in Emerging Economies*, *3*(3), 285-299. https://doi.org/10.26710/sbsee.v3i3.1933

Shurr, J., Minuk, A., Holmqvist, M., Östlund, D., Ghaith, N., & Reed, B. (2023). Parent perspectives on inclusive education for students with intellectual disability: A scoping review of the literature. *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities*, *69*(5), 633-643.

Singal, N. (2016). Schooling children with disabilities: Parental perceptions and experiences. *International Journal of Educational Development*, *50*, 33-40. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2016.05.010

Stevens, L., & Wurf, G. (2020). Perceptions of inclusive education: A mixed methods investigation of parental attitudes in three Australian primary schools. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *24*(4), 351-365. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1464068

Tryfon, M., Anastasia, A., & Eleni, R. (2021). Parental perspectives on inclusive education for children with intellectual disabilities in Greece. *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities*, *67*(6), 397-405. https://doi.org/10.1080/20473869.2019.1675429

UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. (2016). General comment No. 4 (2016), Article 24: Right to inclusive education (CRPD/C/GC/4). *United Nations*.

UNESCO. (1994). The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. *Unesco*.

UNESCO. (2020). Global education monitoring report 2020: Inclusion and education: All means all. *Unesco*.

United Nations. (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. *United Nations*.

Yazıcıoğlu, T., & Sümer Dodur, H. M. (2023). Exploring parental experiences in inclusive education for children with intellectual disabilities. *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities*. https://doi.org/10.1080/20473869.2023.2280861

Ainscow, M. (2020). Promoting inclusion and equity in education: Lessons from international experiences. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, *6*(1), 7-16. https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2020.1729587

Benson, S., Al-Natour, M., & Hussein Diaa, M. (2024). Parent input: Shaping inclusive education for students with disabilities. *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities*, *70*(6), 1102-1111. https://doi.org/10.1080/20473869.2024.2381909

Carew, M. T., Deluca, M., Groce, N., & Kett, M. (2019). The impact of an inclusive education intervention on teacher preparedness to educate children with disabilities within the Lakes Region of Kenya. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 23*(3), 229-244. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1430181

De Boer, A., Pijl, S. J., & Minnaert, A. (2010). Attitudes of parents towards inclusive education: A review of the literature. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 25*(2), 165-181. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856251003658694

Duhaney, L. M. G., & Salend, S. J. (2000). Parental perceptions of inclusive educational placements. *Remedial and Special Education, 21*(2), 121-128.

Hotulainen, R., & Takala, M. (2014). Parents' views on the success of integration of students with special education needs. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *18*(2), 140-154. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2012.759630

Jigyel, K., Miller, J. A., Mavropoulou, S., & Berman, J. (2020). Benefits and concerns: Parents' perceptions of inclusive schooling for children with special educational needs (SEN) in Bhutan. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 24*(10), 1064-1080. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1511761

Kenny, M., Shevlin, M., Walsh, P. N., & McNeela, E. (2005). Accessing mainstream: Examining the struggle for parents of children who have learning difficulties. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, *5*(1), 11-19.

Khalid, L., Malik, S., & Asghar, M. Z. (2021). Inclusive practices in the existing school environment: Parental perceptions and concerns. *Sustainable Business and Society in Emerging Economies*, *3*(3), 285-299. https://doi.org/10.26710/sbsee.v3i3.1933

Leyser, Y., & Kirk, R. (2004). Evaluating inclusion: An examination of parent views and factors influencing their perspectives. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, *51*(3), 271-285.

Lui, M., Yang, L., & Sin, K. F. (2017). Parents' perspective of the impact of school practices on the functioning of students with special educational needs. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education, 64*(6), 624-643.

Palmer, D. S., Fuller, K., Arora, T., & Nelson, M. (2001). Taking sides: Parent views on inclusion for their children with severe disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, *67*(4), 467-484.

Poon-McBrayer, K. F., & McBrayer, P. A. (2013). Parental account of support for specific learning difficulties in Hong Kong. *British Journal of Special Education, 40*(2), 65-71.

Rafferty, Y., Boettcher, C., & Griffin, K. W. (2001). Benefits and risks of reverse inclusion for preschoolers with and without disabilities: Parents' perspectives. *Journal of Early Intervention*, *24*(4), 266-286.

Rogers, C. (2007). Experiencing an 'inclusive' education: Parents and their children with 'special educational needs'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 28*(1), 55-68.

Sánchez-Pujalte, L., Gómez-Domínguez, M. T., Soto-Rubio, A., & Navarro-Mateu, D. (2020). Does the school really support my child? SOFIA: An assessment tool for families of children with SEN in Spain. *Sustainability*, *12*(19), 7879. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12197879

Sharma, U., Woodcock, S., May, F., & Subban, P. (2022). Examining parental perception of inclusive education climate. Frontiers in Education, 7, 907742. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2022.907742

Singal, N. (2016). Schooling children with disabilities: Parental perceptions and experiences. *International Journal of Educational Development, 50,* 33-40. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2016.05.010

Stevens, L., & Wurf, G. (2020). Perceptions of inclusive education: A mixed methods investigation of parental attitudes in three Australian primary schools. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *24*(4), 351-365. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1464068

Swick, K. J., & Hooks, L. (2005). Parental experiences and beliefs regarding inclusive placements of their special needs children. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *32*(6), 397-402.

Tryfon, M., Anastasia, A., & Eleni, R. (2021). Parental perspectives on inclusive education for children with intellectual disabilities in Greece. *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities*, *67*(6), 397-405. https://doi.org/10.1080/20473869.2019.1675429

Un Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. (2016). General comment No. 4 (2016), Article 24: Right to inclusive education (CRPD/C/GC/4). *United Nations*.

UNESCO. (1994). The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. *Unesco*.

UNESCO. (2020). Global education monitoring report 2020: Inclusion and education: All means all. *Unesco*.

United Nations. (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. *United Nations*.

Whitaker, P. (2007). Provision for youngsters with autistic spectrum disorders in mainstream schools: What parents say and what parents want. *British Journal of Special Education*, *34*(3), 170-178.

Wong, M. E., Poon, K. K., Kaur, S., & Ng, Z. J. (2015). Parental perspectives and challenges in inclusive education in Singapore. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, *35*(1), 85-97. https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2013.878309

Yazıcıoğlu, T., & Sümer Dodur, H. M. (2023). Exploring parental experiences in inclusive education for children with intellectual disabilities. *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities*. https://doi.org/10.1080/20473869.2023.2280861.