



Implementing child-friendly school principles in early childhood education: a field study on teachers' practices and challenges

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Abstract

Early childhood education (ECE) is a crucial stage in children's holistic development, covering physical, cognitive, linguistic, social-emotional, and moral aspects. This article reviews the concept of Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) as a framework that places children's rights, protection, and participation as the main foundation of learning. National and international policies such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Indonesian instruments emphasize protection from violence and the fulfillment of children's rights, and UNICEF, through the concept of Child-Friendly Schools, has become the foundation for child-friendly practices in PAUD. Field studies conducted at three different PAUD institutions in Malang show that the implementation of CFS varies according to the local context, with the main supporting factors being the commitment of the school principal, ongoing teacher training, and parental involvement; the main obstacles include limited facilities, resources, and supervisory capacity. The findings indicate that the implementation of CFS improves a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for positive parenting, while also increasing participation, well-being, and play-based learning. In real terms, the study suggests using more flexible and situation-based approaches, improving teachers' skills, and building strong connections between schools, families, and communities to better support the long-term success of CFS.

Keywords:

Early Childhood Education; Child-Friendly School;
Implementation; Qualitative Research; School Environment

A. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is a foundational component of a child's lifelong learning pathway. During this developmental phase, children develop their physical, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, and moral capabilities at a rapid and simultaneous rate. Well-renowned developmental theorists such as Piaget, Erikson, and Vygotsky claim that the set of experiences gathered during the first few years of their life determine and shape patterns of intellectual, affective, and behavioral development later on in life (Yi & Keat, 2024). Consequently, ECE institutions serve more than the traditional purpose of introductory educational settings. They are also social systems that are decisive in the lives of young children, building peer relationships, socializing pro-social behavior, and nurturing a critical sense of security and belonging. For this reason, the effectiveness of ECE should not be measured according to traditional academic achievement-based standards. In its place, the assessment has to be done in light of the school's ability to nurture holistic child development while carefully addressing the intrinsic needs of the child in question and their essential human rights. In principle, every child has the right to an adequate and safe educational environment that actively fosters their highest level of growth and development from birth (Tang, 2019).

Originally, the imperative to ensure that children's rights are fulfilled comes mainly from the United Nations. This is furthered domestically in Indonesian Law No. 35 of 2014,

requiring the comprehensive protection of children (Government of the Republic of Indonesia, 2014). Within educational contexts, UNICEF (2020) stipulates that children have the right to be protected from all forms of physical and psychological harm, including verbal abuse. They also have a right to active participation in their pedagogical processes and equal treatment devoid of discriminatory practices. Therefore, moral obligation and legal mandates require educational institutions to ensure these rights are realized through the adoption of a child-centered educational paradigm (Sofyan & Gunawan, 2023). One clear strategy for accomplishing this is the application of the Child-Friendly School (CFS) model. This pedagogical structure places the child at the center of the learning process, but at the same time ensures that their rights are fully regarded and protected in the context of the school setting. A CFS is broadly described as a place where the rights of children are visibly respected, honored, and protected from violence, discriminatory actions, and other forms of injustice (Suharsiwi et al., 2019). What started as a concept from UNICEF was then taken up by the Indonesian government as an avenue to institute learning centers characterized by safety, cleanliness, health, inclusivity, and attention to the particular needs and concerns of children. The central tenet of CFS is the positioning of the child at the heart of education, meaning that students should have the capacity for self-determination, involvement in decision-making processes, and consideration of opinion during the pedagogical process. Moreover, CFS also places great emphasis on the need for teachers to have a warm and caring attitude towards students, thus producing a learning climate that is secure and helpful to lower academic pressure on students (Setiyadi et al., 2025).

The Indonesian government, acting through the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA) and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek), has strategically implemented diverse policies aimed at accelerating the institutionalization of Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) across all educational tiers. This initiative is integrated into the overarching national effort to establish a Child Friendly Indonesia, with operational details articulated in various regulatory documents, notably the specific Child-Friendly School Guidelines (KemenPPPA, 2022). Crucially, these guidelines underscore the paramount significance of tripartite collaboration involving educational institutions, families, and the wider community in cultivating a learning ecosystem that is demonstrably secure, inclusive, and entirely devoid of violence.

Although the concept of Child-Friendly Schools has been widely disseminated throughout Indonesia, the empirical evidence to date suggests that complete and effective implementation remains a significant challenge, not least within (ECE) (Pangesti et al., 2023). Many ECE institutions are said to apply child-friendly principles inconsistently in daily institutional life. For example, there is an excessive orientation toward academic teaching, the use of punitive language or ineffective disciplinary measures, and a lack of opportunities for children to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes. These ongoing issues present a considerable gap between the ideals of best practice espoused by CFS and the current operational reality. This implementation gap in the development of genuinely child-friendly ECE environments is further entrenched by systemic barriers, such as resource constraints, a lack of professional learning opportunities for teachers, inadequate infrastructure, and weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation regimes (Fahmi, 2021).

Educators act as key drivers in the actualization process of the CFS model. They directly and instrumentally contribute to creating a favorable pedagogical environment, establishing a sound sense of security in children, and instilling essential values of mutual respect and empathy in them (Setiyadi et al., 2025). However, ECE professionals are often plagued by a principal problem related to the conflict between rigid administrative and curricular expectations on the one hand, and their own pledge to construct learning processes conforming to the principles of child-friendliness on the other. A deficit in comprehensive professional development regarding the CFS approach among many teachers results in the concept's application often being merely performative or superficial, failing to translate into substantive classroom interaction and management practices (Yosada & Kurniati, 2019).

Therefore, with such contextual gaps, serious research is warranted that takes a close look at what is understood by ECE educators and how CFS principles are put into practice in daily routines. In a field study design, this research effort engages in the provision of accurate empirical details of how the principles of CFS are translated into practice in those critical domains: teacher and child interaction, classroom organization, and the learning process itself. The study also carries importance for its systematic identification of several barriers which educators face in terms of internal factors-inadequate knowledge and skills-and external factors-institutional lack of support, lack of involvement on the part of parents, and the absence of necessary facilities.

This is very important research because it directly aligns with efforts to create ECE environments that truly support children and uphold their basic rights. It is expected that the findings will provide real, empirical data with respect to how CFS principles are implemented in ECEs. These findings will then be used to develop better future policy and stronger support systems. Theoretically, this study contributes to the extension of current knowledge on child-centered educational policy frameworks. Practically, the results are expected to offer recommendations that are useful for PAUD institutions, teacher professional development programs, and government agencies in fostering sustainable implementation of the CFS principles.

Literature Review

The Concept of Child-Friendly Schools (CFS)

The conceptual framework for Child-Friendly Schools was first designed and advocated through programs initiated by UNICEF, starting in the 1990s. (UNICEF, 2020) CFS are educational institutions that are fundamentally inclusive, safe, healthy, and participatory, and whose operations are organized around the protection and realization of child rights. The underlying philosophy of the approach lies in the explicit positioning of children at the center of the whole learning process. The child-centered paradigm requires that all policies of the school, curricula, pedagogic activities, and intra-institutional relationships be intentionally planned to advance the best interests of the child.

CFS are founded on the principle that education goes beyond the transmission of knowledge, and therefore, a pedagogical environment should be created that protects, empowers, and inspires students. Equitable access and opportunities should, therefore, be provided by these institutions irrespective of a child's background, ability, gender, or socioeconomic status. Inclusivity functions as a non-negotiable feature; thus, no child should be rejected or singled out for discriminatory treatment (Rahmad et al., 2024).

CFS also guarantees the physical and psychological safety of children from all forms of violence, bullying, and neglect. Health is another important dimension that necessitates maintaining a clean and wholesome environment that caters to the needs of the student population in all aspects of school life. In the process, the principle of participation ensures that children have an opportunity for expressing their views and contributing to decision-making and are actively involved in the design of their instructional activities. Consequently, the CFS functions not merely as an academic setting but as a social sphere dedicated to cultivating children into critical thinkers, confident individuals, and responsible citizens (Yosada & Kurniati, 2019).

Child-Friendly Principles in Early Childhood Education

In the context of Early Childhood Education (ECE), implementing child-friendly school principles is crucial as early childhood represents the golden phase of human development. During this time, children undergo significant growth in physical, emotional, cognitive, social, and moral areas. Consequently, the learning approach in PAUD should focus on holistic development rather than solely on academic achievement (Pamadhi et al., 2021).

The main concepts of child-friendly school in early childhood education have been summed up through three main pillars, protection, provision, and participation.

1. Protection

This concept maintains that a child should feel safe and secure during the learning process. A teacher should never use any form of violence, hitting, or bad words during teaching. The school should be a safe place that is free from all dangers, where toys and playgrounds fit their age and are safe for usage. Safety is also the way to show kids that they are loved and respected. Teachers should make the classroom a friendly and safe place where children's feelings are valued (Nashiruddin & Yuliana, 2022).

2. Provision

This principle concerns the realization of children's rights to quality education. In early childhood education, this implies provision of learning tools that are both attractive to the children and relevant to their stage of development. The teachers should be pedagogically competent and caring to provide an environment conducive to learning. Children need to learn through meaningful plays to ensure that they develop in a happy and motivated way. Even the nutritional and health needs of the children require the cooperation of teachers and parents with active community involvement for their all-round growth and development (Mardia et al., 2025).

3. Participation

Participation is about children being treated not only as recipients of knowledge but also as significant actors in the learning process. They are allowed to choose activities they want to do, share their thoughts, ask questions, and speak freely, but in a way that is safe and positive. By taking part actively, kids learn to make choices, listen to others, and build responsibility and confidence (Fitriyani et al., 2025).

The implementation of these three principles in early childhood education fosters a humanistic and inclusive learning environment, where each child feels respected, cherished, and secure to explore. Teachers act as facilitators, guiding children through enjoyable learning experiences rather than through pressure. Thus, child-friendly principles in early childhood education not only support academic development, but also form the basis of a strong personality, empathy, and good character from an early age.

Research conducted by Suci Rahmadani & Malik (2024) describes that CFS are a strategic program in order to create a safe, comfortable, clean, healthy, caring educational environment, free from violence, discrimination, and harmful treatment, of which the fulfillment and protection of children's rights are the main foundation. The strategy for establishing CFS which has been successfully implemented at KB Al Mardhiyyah 3 Samarinda consists of a series of activities in an integrated manner. The implementation of CFS is carried out through the management of a safe physical environment (such as classroom facilities and play areas that support child safety), the application of positive parenting by teachers who avoid physical and verbal punishment, and the use of play-based learning methods. In addition, the school actively promotes a culture of non-violence through a code of conduct and social skills training for conflict resolution and runs regular parenting programs to raise parents' awareness of positive parenting. The school is also committed to inclusivity by providing special approaches and facilities for children with special needs. The main reasons this program works well are the principal strong dedication and leadership, ongoing training for teachers, and parents who are actively involved.

Regular use of CFS helps a lot in the overall growth of young children. Children who learn in a child-friendly environment demonstrate higher levels of psychological well-being, a strong sense of security, cooperative attitudes, and the ability to build good social relationships. Effective positive parenting has also been shown to reduce aggressive behavior in children. Cognitively, a collaborative and supportive learning environment enhances children's critical and creative thinking skills, in line with Vygotsky theory. These positive impacts are also supported by the school's success in creating a child-friendly learning environment and supporting sustainable positive parenting at home. However, CFS faces challenges in the form of a lack of awareness among some parents about the importance of positive parenting (still using harsh disciplinary methods) and limited facilities due to a lack of financial support.

Another study Nashiruddin & Yuliana (2022) had the main mission of identifying the concept and assessing the implementation of Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) based on the character values of early childhood, with the aim of creating a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable school environment to maximize the learning process and outcomes. The implementation strategy for CFS at RA Hidayah was carried out through four main stages, namely preparation, planning, implementation, and outcome (children with character), and this was realized through four core components: protection, care, education, and health. The implementation uses strategies that include changing the paradigm of teachers to become mentors/friends of children, role modeling by adults, ensuring full protection, and actively involving parents. The implementation in the field is carried out by providing non-violent care, applying child-based education with the “learning while playing” method where child participation is prioritized, and maintaining children's health (for example, by monitoring nutrition and prohibiting indiscriminate snacking). The results of the study show that RA Hidayah has successfully implemented all four CFS concepts. This has had a significant impact, namely, producing students with Islamic character, because character values are instilled through daily habits and role models from teachers, which are also supported by strong cooperation and trust between teachers and parents.

Then Hasan Baharun (2021) also examined how the leadership of a woman at RA Nurul Salam can create a conducive Child-Friendly School (CFS) environment and ensure the fulfillment of children's rights and protection from violence, discrimination, or mistreatment. This was done by using a strategy that relied on female leadership, which was considered to have the advantages of motherly character, attention to detail, and communication skills. The implementation phase in the field was carried out systematically through four stages, namely: 1) using SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, 2) branding the school through socialization and dissemination of information to parents and the community, 3) implementing a child-friendly school that includes non-violent learning, a loving and caring approach, and the provision of safe facilities and infrastructure, 4) continuous improvement using the Deming concept through routine monitoring and evaluation. The results of implementing this strategy are a more conducive learning atmosphere and increased trust in teachers among parents. The impact is that child-friendly schools have succeeded in creating a comfortable and safe environment, which ultimately enables children to develop their potential optimally and protects them physically and psychologically.

Furthermore Pratiwi (2022) conducted research aimed at evaluating the Child Friendly School (CFS) program developed by UNICEF as a solution for building student character, in line with the role of schools in balancing the cognitive, spiritual, physical-motor, linguistic, and socio-emotional aspects of students. In its implementation, this research uses a CFS implementation strategy driven by the philosophy of children's rights and must apply six important components, including pedagogy, health, inclusiveness, gender sensitivity, community participation, and protection by integrating child protection principles (without violence and discrimination) into policies, curricula, and daily relationships between stakeholders. The results of this study show that Child-Friendly Schools can be optimized if the principal, teachers, staff, and school committee collaborate well in carrying out their roles to realize the six main components of Child-Friendly Schools. In addition, the concept of CFS as a safe, healthy, and attractive environment is increasingly recognized by various parties. Thus, CFS has a positive impact and is successful in creating positive conditions for learning, where students feel safe, respected, supported, and challenged, and is successful in creating an inclusive environment, especially for female students, and promoting student-centered active learning that contributes to good character building (moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral behavior).

Ofojebe & Ezugoh (2020) also conducted research aimed at investigating the extent to which health facilities are provided in primary schools in Delta State, Nigeria, in order to promote a healthy Child Friendly School (CFS) environment. The strategy applied in this study was to use a descriptive survey method by distributing questionnaires to 566 elementary school

principals to collect data on four main aspects of Child-Friendly School health facilities, namely: school clinic facilities, sanitation, sports, and recreation. The main results of this study generally show that there is no adequate provision of school health facilities to promote a healthy CFS environment in elementary schools in Delta State. Specifically, the majority of respondents disagreed that their schools had clinic facilities (such as a sickbay, professional doctors/nurses, or adequate medicines), sanitation facilities (such as a well-stocked first aid kit, hand washing facilities, and adequate toilets), sports facilities, or recreational facilities (such as a well-equipped playground). The impact of this lack of health facilities directly hinders the achievement of the Child-Friendly School goal, which is to create conditions that are safe and supportive of children's physical, mental, and social health in order to maximize the benefits of education. As a recommended solution and impact, it is suggested that the Delta State Government collaborate with relevant agencies to provide adequate health facilities, including school clinics, sanitation, sports, and recreation facilities, in order to create a healthy Child-Friendly School environment for children.

Another study Fitriani et al., (2021) examined the implementation of the Child-Friendly School (CFS) model in a public elementary school in Jakarta. It originated from the need to address issues of discrimination, bullying, and violence in order to improve the quality of education, as well as the lack of literature on the holistic examination of the characteristics and six essential components of CFS in the Indonesian context. The research strategy used was a single qualitative case study at SD Negeri Ragunan 01, which has been declared a Child-Friendly School since 2015, by collecting comprehensive data through observation, in-depth interviews with various stakeholders (principals, teachers, parents, and students), and questionnaires assessing 13 characteristics and six components of Child-Friendly Schools adapted from the UNICEF concept. The results showed that the 13 CFS characteristics had been implemented very well (above 95%) and the school had met the requirements of the six essential components of a Child-Friendly School in Indonesia, including child-centered learning processes and a strong (albeit unwritten) commitment from the entire school community. The result is a school environment that is friendly, safe, caring, comfortable, healthy, and enjoyable, where there is no discrimination or violence. This environment helps students stay motivated and achieve quality education, allowing all children to reach their full potential.

Various studies indicate that Child-Friendly Schools are a crucial and effective intervention to facilitate the holistic development of young children both at school and outside school. It is, therefore, important in Indonesia and globally. The central idea of CFS is to create a non-violent, friendly, and enjoyable atmosphere, free from violence, discrimination, or stress. This provides an environment where children can perform better and grow satisfactorily at school. The Child-Friendly School model also helps to forge a well-rounded character. It assists schools in combating significant issues such as loss of moral values among children and bullying. Interventions based on non-violent parenting, modeling by the teachers, and value lessons have assisted children to improve in their behavioral areas such as coexistence, care, resolution of conflicts, self-confidence, and responsibility. It assists in providing a safe and supportive school for all girls and boys, and such an attitude may be conducive to emotional safety.

From the perspective of learning and thinking, CFS uses teaching methods focused on the child, which include playing. The atmosphere in this setting is relaxed and non-judgmental, features that contribute to students having deep and creative thoughts and taking pleasure in learning. Good facilities, including health care, clean restrooms, and places to play, are also necessary for keeping kids healthy and safe, promoting the best possible education for them.

Success in implementing the CFS approach depends on various internal and external factors. Teachers, too, have to assume the role of mentor, friend, and role model, so their commitment, coupled with ongoing training in positive parenting, strongly influences the quality of CFS. Parents themselves are the crucial partners who must be fully involved through parenting programs that help maintain consistency in child-friendly values at home and school. It is this kind of strong partnership among administrators, teachers, and parents that can ensure an educational environment based on the principles of children's rights and freedom from

violence, which can allow the full development of early childhood academic and nonacademic potentials.

B. METHODS

Qualitative approach with descriptive-interpretive method has been adopted in this investigation, which was thoughtfully chosen because it best served to find an in-depth understanding and nuanced interpretation of the phenomenon as perceived by the participants. Data collection has been done through a triangulation approach involving participatory observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and intense document analysis. Purposive sampling was adopted to ensure the selection of participants who possessed both direct relevance for the study and critical, essential information. The total number of participants involved in research was 15, wherein 6 were teachers, 3 were principals, and 6 were parents/guardians. Field research was conducted in three different Early Childhood Education institutions within Malang City.

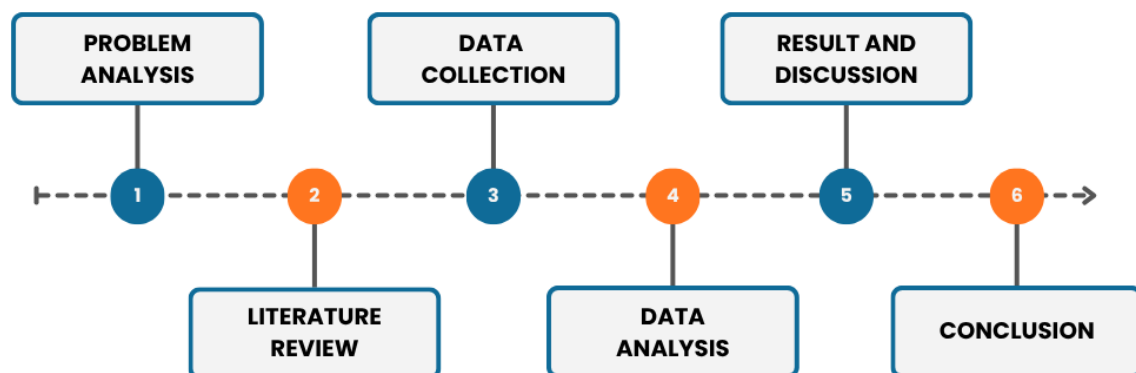


Figure 1. Research Flow

Data analysis was done using the interactive model suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of three concurrent processes: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction consisted of the researchers systematically selecting, focusing, and abstracting the raw field data, followed by categorizing the data into predefined themes, such as application of protection, fulfillment, and participation principles, and implementation challenges. The reduced data was then displayed as descriptive narratives and analytical matrices to facilitate the identification of patterns and relationships from the predetermined categories. The concluding stage consisted of drawing conclusions iteratively and verifying them stringently in repetitive cycles to establish the validity and reliability of the research findings. Data trustworthiness was specifically established through source and methodological triangulation, which entailed comparing interview transcripts, observational records, and documentary evidence from various informants to ensure informational consistency (Auliya, 2025).

The trustworthiness of the data was maintained through rigorous attention to the four criteria set by Lincoln and Guba 1985 credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The credibility was achieved through methodological triangulation and member checking-confirmation of interview results by participants, while transferability was enhanced. thick descriptions of the research setting that allow for possible applications. in analogous contexts. The dependability and confirmability were strictly assured through the systematic documentation of the research process, including a comprehensive audit trail, and reliance only on empirical evidence that could be verified independently.

The analysis was specifically targeted at two main dimensions: the fidelity of teachers practices in implementing Child-Friendly School (CFS) principles and the antecedent challenges. enabling and promoting factors that influence these processes. The first dimension

encompasses the operationalizing the principles of child protection, fulfillment, and participation within pedagogical activities. The second dimension incorporated internal factors such as teachers' knowledge, skills and disposition and external factors such as school policy support involvement and infrastructural availability. Using this interpretive qualitative approach, The study aimed to generate a granular understanding of how ECE was being implemented teachers internalize and apply CFS principles in their daily practices along with the identification of effective strategies for mitigating various implementation hurdles.

C. RESULT & DISCUSSION

The present study was carried out over three different Early Childhood Education settings. ECE centers located in Malang Regency and City, namely TK Muslimat NU 2 Singosari, RA Muslimat NU 21 Malang, and TK Muslimat NU 08 Darussalam Wagir. These particular institutions were selected based on discernible differences in their socio-environmental context, institutional traditions, and the demonstrated level of adherence to Child-Friendly School CFS framework. The variation was sought to provide a comprehensive and multifaceted perspective on operational dynamics in the CFS concept across diverse ECE environments.

TK Muslimat NU 2 Singosari is an ECE institution situated in a semi-urban location, accommodates 95 students and has 8 staff members. The school is at for the proactive integration of child-friendly values in its pedagogical practices, attained through curriculum enhancement, special parenting workshops, and teacher professional development focused on non-violent discipline. RA Muslimat NU 21 Malang operates in an urban environment, enrolling 83 students and staffed by 7 teachers. This school has established a character-based learning framework and maintains an internal child protection policy, which is ensured through the strict teacher code of ethics as well as through the implementation of positive discipline system. On the other hand, TK Muslimat NU 08 Wagir, located in the Malang Regency, accommodates 97 children with 7 teachers. It is distinguished by its proficiency in the integration of religious values and nature-based pedagogy. Although the concept of CFS has not been formally adopted, its routine operations demonstrate a commitment to children's emotional and spiritual development well-being through nurturance and exemplary interactions.

Implementation of the Principle of Fulfilling Children's Rights

Operationalizing the principle of the fulfillment of rights across these three institutions indicates that each of them has a unique strategic method of ensuring that children are given the best opportunities for learning, recreation, self-expression, and to attain a robust sense of safety and well-being within their respective environments.

At TK Muslimat NU 2 Singosari, educators facilitate the fulfillment of rights through exploring diverse exploratory opportunities by using different pedagogical resources, such as literacy corners, sensorimotor play areas, and simple project-based activities. Students will be encouraged to try out new activities without undue stress, provided that the teachers are patient guidance and support. The school deliberately fosters a supportive and safe environment where children are confident to ask questions, express opinions, and establish positive peer relations. Moreover, weekly activities incorporate experiential learning with reflection time, Thereby helping children internalize moral and ethical understanding through direct experience.

The commitment of RA Muslimat NU 21 Malang to the fulfillment of rights can be seen in its curriculum, which is systematically based on child-friendly principles. Each learning theme is explicitly linked to the development of character and the protection of children's rights. Even the RPPH, or Daily Learning Implementation Plan, includes the specific indicator that "children display a sense of security and happiness while learning." Teachers make use of play in learning by methodologies used can often include loose parts. This institution has adequate infrastructure includes a dedicated playroom, washing facilities, and a spacious hall, which collectively nurture social-emotional development, thereby confirming the effective realization of children's rights to learning, recreation, and health.

Meanwhile, at TK Muslimat NU 08 Darussalam Wagir, rights fulfillment has been mainly it is attained through the strategic integration of nature-based activities with religious tenets. Practical activities for children include gardening, animal care, and exploratory play within the school grounds. These pedagogical activities stimulate not only motor and social skills, acquisition but also instill in them environmental stewardship and a sense of responsibility. Despite infrastructural limitations, particularly about special educational resources, the the most important resource in education remains educators' commitment to making learning exciting rights implementation. A comparative study conducted among these three institutions showed that even though the optimal fulfillment of rights often occurs in settings with superior facilities, Non-traditional approaches centered on nature and religious values have shown comparable efficacy in addressing the children's holistic developmental needs.

Implementation of Child Participation Principles and Supporting Factors

Child-Friendly Schools (CFS), as it deliberately creates opportunities for children's self-expression, and involvement in relevant decision-making processes.

In TK Muslimat NU 2 Singosari, educators foster agency by allowing children to autonomy in choosing roles in imaginative play or choosing materials and colors in art activities. Moreover, children are involved in reflecting on daily activities through the formulation their most and least favored experiences. This practice affirms the educators' recognition of children's voices, placing them as active subjects in the pedagogical structure.

At RA Muslimat NU 21 Malang, child participation is managed systematically through small-group discussions. Teachers encourage children to suggest ideas for the following day activities, which are then incorporated into the instructional planning. The children are often leadership roles assigned to them include leading the prayers, narrating stories to their peers, and assisting in organizing the play materials. This creates a democratic learning environment where children feel heard and valued for their input.

Conversely, participation at the TK Muslimat NU 08 Darussalam Wagir is marked by a more spontaneous and organic flow. Children express themselves in unstructured Activities such as free play, singing, or storytelling, to which teachers respond with an open and appreciative disposition. While formal structuring is lacking in this pattern, it invariably shows respect for children's expressions as an integral part of the learning process.

Table 1. Research Findings on Religious Moderation Values in Schools

Principle	TK Muslimat NU 2 Singosari	TK Muslimat NU 21 Malang	TK Muslimat NU 08 Darussalam Wagir
Protection	Teachers apply positive discipline and reflection corners for children in conflict. There is no physical/verbal punishment. Security supervision is adequate with fences and safe play areas.	A written anti-violence policy is implemented. The school environment security system is well organized.	Protection is provided through religious practices (prayer together, gentle advice).
Provision	Children are given the opportunity to explore in the literacy corner, play sensorimotor games, and do simple projects. Teachers act	The lesson plans contain child-friendly indicators. Learning activities use the learning by playing method with homemade teaching	Nature-based learning (gardening, feeding animals). The environment supports exploration.

	as facilitators.	aids. Facilities are adequate.	
Participation	Children are involved in choosing roles when role-playing and expressing their opinions.	Children participate actively through small group discussions and opportunities to lead prayers or share experiences.	Participation arises spontaneously during free play. Teachers respond positively, but this is not yet systematically planned.
Supporting Factors	The principal's commitment and a culture of mutual respect. Teachers already understand the basic principles of CFS.	Support for teacher training, active parental participation, and institutional policy support.	The emotional closeness between teachers and children and a strong religious culture foster a positive atmosphere.

Empirical results show the successful implementation of the Child-Friendly School. Principles from all three Early Childhood Education institutions, TK Muslimat NU 2 Singosari, RA Muslimat NU 21 Malang, and TK Muslimat NU 08 Darussalam Wagir notwithstanding these different institutional features and approaches, all institutions share a uniform commitment in the protection, fulfillment of rights as well as participation of children. However, differences in socio-cultural context and resource Accessibility have demonstrably modulated the specific efficiency and manner in which each school carries out these basic initiatives.

TK Muslimat NU 2 Singosari excels in the implementation of positive Discipline and reflective pedagogical practices that take into consideration and prioritize the emotional understanding of children as individuals. On the other hand, RA Muslimat NU 21 Malang Demonstrates most systematic implementation supported by codified policies and consistent teacher training, along with strong parental involvement in creating a safe and child-centered learning atmosphere. Meanwhile, TK Muslimat NU 08 Darussalam Wagir is the best in developing a A warm emotional and spiritual ethos is achieved through the strategic employment of religious pedagogy, and nature-based learning activities.

Overall, the findings agree with the propositions of UNICEF (2020), that assert the efficacy of CFS relies on contextual environmental factors and supportive institutional policies and the professional competencies of the personnel. Moreover, the results Substantiate Nuraeni & Nurunnisa, (2020) perspective by emphasizing that child-friendly education thrives best when the school culture regards children as It recognizes valued learners beyond mere material resources. Consequently, the operationalization of CFS within Early Childhood Education (ECE) must be contextually adapted to the specific socio-cultural milieu of each institution rather than being constrained by a rigid one size fits all approach.

Key suggestions to improve CFS in the future emphasize enhancing teacher competencies through continuous professional development, in providing secure and supportive physical learning environments, and in establishing strong collaborative skills partnerships with parents and the wider community. Thus, each ECE center should work to create a learning environment that is inherently inclusive, safe dedicated to the holistic respect and fulfillment of children's rights.

D. CONCLUSION

This study successfully established the application of Child in context. CFS principles within three different Early Childhood Education institutions. It is characterized by institutional diversity. The findings show that effective Operationalization of the core principles of protection,

rights fulfillment, and child participation is substantially modulated by internal institutional commitment, robust policy support, and the Resource allocation by strategy fitted to the local socio-cultural environment. The differentiated approaches observed across the schools generated unique, institution-specific practices that effectively facilitated children's emotional, social, and cognitive development, fitting best the according to their individual needs and local environment. The critical determinants for successful CFS functioning were identified as continuous teacher professional development, active parental.

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