

## **Child-Friendly Schools in Primary Education Institutions**

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### **Abstract:**

This study aims to identify the implementation of five indicators of Child-Friendly Schools at SDN SN Karang Mekar 1, Banjarmasin City. This study's research type is qualitative descriptive research, utilizing methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. This study found that the written policy indicators have been well implemented by declaring a commitment to non-violence and creating a safe student environment. Child-friendly learning processes are implemented with a non-violent and fun approach, supporting an inclusive learning atmosphere. Training for teachers on children's rights has created a school atmosphere that supports students' holistic development. Although school facilities are adequate, improved accessibility for children with special needs is still needed. In addition, students' participation in extracurricular activities is good, but their decision-making involvement still needs improvement. The implications of the findings suggest the need for more robust policies, continuous training, and improved infrastructure and student participation to realize entirely child-friendly schools.

**Keywords:** Child-Friendly School; Written Policy, Child-Friendly Learning Teacher Training; School Facilities, Student Participation.

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## Introduction

Education is crucial in humanization, guiding individuals toward a moral life and helping them adjust to societal values ([Andreas & Muqowim, 2020](#)). The fulfilment of children's educational rights can be systematically planned, as creating a conducive learning atmosphere is essential for developing students' potential. A fun and engaging learning environment enhances academic growth and strengthens students' spiritual, emotional, and moral capacities. This aligns with the mandate outlined in Article 1 of [Law No. 20 of 2003](#), which emphasizes the development of noble character and personality alongside intellectual achievement.

Moreover, [Law No. 23 of 2002](#) concerning child protection, specifically Article 4, reinforces that children have the right to grow, participate appropriately, and be treated with dignity, free from violence and discrimination. Unfortunately, violence remains a significant issue in Indonesian schools, particularly in the form of physical, verbal, and psychological bullying ([Harun et al. \(2024\)](#)). Primary and secondary school students are especially vulnerable, and the effects of violence can be seen in lower academic achievement and hindered scholastic abilities ([Torres et al., 2020](#)). The long-term consequences of violence extend beyond education, impacting children's physical, mental, and emotional well-being ([Njelesani et al., 2022](#)). This highlights the importance of policies like the Child-Friendly School initiative, which aims to position children as legal subjects with rights that must be protected.

The Indonesian government has implemented various policies, such as the Child-Friendly School program initiated by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, to create a safe and conducive learning environment. This program protects children's rights while fostering intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth. The goal is to develop responsible, tolerant, well-rounded individuals prepared to contribute positively to society.

Primary education is a fundamental right the Indonesian Constitution guarantees ([Rahmad, 2021](#)). Schools are spaces where students learn, interact, play, and grow alongside teachers and peers ([Huriah, 2019](#)). Child-friendly schools are ideal environments for school-aged children, as they centre the learning process on the child's needs. These schools are characterized by safe, clean, and supportive environments that prioritise students' physical, emotional, and social well-being ([Rangkuti & Maksun, 2019](#)). Elementary school years are crucial for fostering children's potential and developing the character traits that will benefit society ([Satriyawan & Ichsan, 2020](#)).

A child-friendly school is defined as an educational unit that offers a safe, healthy, and culturally sensitive environment that guarantees children's rights and shields them from violence, discrimination, and other forms of mistreatment. Such schools also encourage children's participation in planning, policy-making, learning, and evaluation processes related to their education and well-being ([Sumarni et al., 2019](#)). Success in such an environment depends on various factors, including the quality of educators, infrastructure, and school management ([Rahmawati, 2020](#)). Ensuring a child-friendly and quality education requires long-term investment and commitment from all stakeholders, including the government, which plays a crucial role in organizing high-quality and child-centred education.

The concept of child-friendly schools is fundamental in ensuring that children are protected from abuse and are given opportunities to take responsibility for their development ([Sutami et al., 2020](#)). These schools must be accessible, affordable, and inclusive. Educational institutions must commit to policies supporting these principles, ensuring that all children benefit from a nurturing and empowering learning environment.

Banjarmasin City, for instance, has made significant strides in promoting child safety and protection, as evidenced by [Mayor Regulation No. 44/2013](#) on developing a child-friendly city. One of the key indicators of this initiative is the establishment of child-friendly educational institutions. Additionally, the construction of sidewalks in Banjarmasin has considered the needs of people with disabilities, further reinforcing the city's commitment to inclusivity and child protection.

Child protection is a priority in education and a broader societal responsibility. The state must protect children as vital assets for the nation's future. This is particularly important when dealing with legal violations involving children. Often, responses to such violations focus on rehabilitation, neglecting the preventive measures necessary to stop children from engaging in unlawful acts in the first place ([Artadiani & Subowo, 2017](#)). Child-friendly policies must be systematically implemented and evaluated against clear indicators to be effective.

[Ministerial regulation No. 12 of 2022](#), which focuses on developing child-friendly city policies, represents an important step toward creating ideal educational environments. However, according to KPAI Commissioner Retno Listyarti (2019), the number of child-friendly schools in Indonesia remains limited only 13,000 out of 400,000 schools and madrasas have implemented this program. This highlights the need for more significant efforts to expand the reach of child-friendly education initiatives.

This research differs from previous research in several significant aspects. First, the research by [Sumarni et al., \(2019\)](#) focuses more on the general evaluation of the implementation of child-friendly schools in various schools in Pekanbaru. Still, the implementation in certain schools needs to be reviewed in depth, so the research needs to be more specific. [Rangkuti & Maksum, \(2019\)](#) broadly discussed the Child-Friendly School implementation policy in Depok City without evaluating the details of schools claiming Child-Friendly School status. [Satriyawan & Ichsan, \(2020\)](#) focused on children's character development in primary schools as part of the Child-Friendly School program, but they needed to thoroughly explore students' participation in decision-making. [Rahmawati, \(2020\)](#) and [Darma et al. \(2023\)](#) focused on evaluating teachers' capacity to implement child-friendly programs through training. Still, they should have discussed training about forming written policies and practical implementation in the field. [Liestyasari et al. \(2023\)](#) found minimal student involvement in decision-making in Child-Friendly School schools in Surakarta. [Riyanto et al. \(2022\)](#) discussed that Child-Friendly School policies in the Pematang district are often hampered by limited resources and lack of technical support from the local government.

The novelty of this research lies in its evaluative focus on implementing the child-friendly school program in Banjarmasin City, specifically in a school that has claimed the status of a Child-Friendly School since 2020. The study will assess the extent to which the policy has been implemented and provide practical recommendations for improving the program's effectiveness. By evaluating the successes and challenges of the current system, this research aims to contribute to the broader efforts to improve the quality of inclusive and child-responsive education in Banjarmasin. The findings will be instrumental in informing future policy development and ensuring that child-friendly education becomes a standard practice across Indonesia.

## **Research Methods**

The research method employed in this study is field research with a qualitative descriptive approach. This comprehensive approach was chosen to thoroughly investigate the implementation of the five indicators of Child-Friendly Schools at SDN SN Karang Mekar 1 in Banjarmasin City. The aim is to provide a detailed description of the Child-friendly School implementation through direct observation and

interviews with the parties involved. The data collection techniques, including semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and documentation, were carefully selected to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

The research team conducted semi-structured interviews with the Principal and Coordinator of the Child-Friendly School Program at SDN SN Karang Mekar 1. This collaborative approach aimed to understand their perspectives on the implementation of written policies, the learning process, teacher training, child-friendly facilities, and student participation. The information obtained from these interviews provides an overview of how the Child-friendly School policy is implemented at the school operational level, as well as the barriers and successes encountered in its implementation.

Observations were conducted directly in the school environment to evaluate existing facilities, infrastructure, and learning activities. This observation includes observing physical facilities such as classrooms, libraries, toilets, and play areas used by students. In addition, researchers also observed how teachers interact with students in the teaching and learning process and the social environment created in the school. These observations provided essential data to assess the suitability of the school conditions with the Child-Friendly School standards.

Documentation was used as a complementary technique to collect written and visual data regarding written school policies, activity schedules, and organizational structures supporting Child-friendly School implementation. Documents such as the mayor's decree on the establishment of Child-Friendly Schools, program signboards, and records of school activities related to child rights training were reviewed in depth. We ensure that existing policies are consistently implemented and well-documented.

The data analysis technique used in this research is the interactive analysis model ([Miles et al., 2014](#)), which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data obtained from interviews, observations and documentation were processed qualitatively to identify the main themes and patterns related to implementing the five Child-friendly School indicators. Conclusions were drawn gradually based on field findings verified through data triangulation from various sources.

We did not examine the participation of the community and alums. Because, in addition to time constraints. We also had difficulty interviewing these two elements because many needed to learn what should exist and be implemented. They also can only follow what has become an existing rule. We are undoubtedly an obstacle because the two elements or indicators we did not choose only became elements we could declare passive for this activity.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Commitment or Written Policies for Child-Friendly Schools**

Creating a child-friendly school involves a combination of commitment and written policies, which are essential in ensuring children's safety, well-being and holistic development. Through child-friendly schools, we aim to fulfil and protect children's rights comprehensively ([Jayanti & Rahmat, 2023](#)). Fulfilment of this first indicator aspect has been pursued and fulfilled well by SDN SN Karang Mekar 1 Banjarmasin City. Certain aspects of declarations and written commitments have been fulfilled with maximum effort. Written policies serve as a formal commitment to child-friendly practices, providing a framework for schools to follow. They outline children's rights and educators' responsibilities, ensuring that all stakeholders are aware of standards and expectations ([Darma et al., 2023](#)). Policies assist in standardizing practices across different schools, ensuring consistency in applying child-friendly principles. Maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all students, regardless of their background or ability, is crucial ([Daryono et al., 2023](#); [Suharsiwi et al., 2023](#)). A written policy also facilitates accountability, as it provides

a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of child-friendly initiatives and identifying areas for improvement ([Daryono et al., 2023](#)).

SDN SN Karang Mekar 1 is designated as a Child Friendly School based on Banjarmasin Mayor Decree No. 626/2020. SDN SN Karang Mekar 1 has declared as a child-friendly school by writing it on the school identity board in the school program section such as flag ceremony, Friday takwa, gymnastics together, scout ceremony, child-friendly school and Adiwiyata school. Establishing a child-friendly school implementation team that involves all members of the education unit, including educators, education personnel, and parents, is crucial to ensure a collaborative effort in creating a supportive and inclusive environment that upholds children's rights and promotes their overall well-being. Anti-violence policies are also strengthened through written appeals, such as prohibiting violent behaviour and *bullying*.

The functions provided by the Violence Prevention and Handling Team at school include: a) Submitting proposals/recommendations for violence prevention programs to the head of the education unit; b) Providing input/suggestions to the head of the education unit regarding safe and comfortable facilities in the education unit; c) Carrying out socialization of policies and programs related to the prevention and handling of violence together with the education unit; d) Receiving and following up reports of suspected violence; e) Handling the findings of suspected violence within the education unit; f) Notifying parents/guardians of students involved in violence; g) Examining reports of suspected violence; h) Providing recommendations for sanctions to the head of the education unit based on the results of the examination; i) Accompanying victims and/or reporters of violence in the education unit environment; j) Facilitating assistance by experts or other services needed by victims, reporters, and/or witnesses; k) Provide referrals for victims to services according to the needs of victims of violence; l) Provide recommendations for children's education in the event that students involved in violence are children in conflict with the law; m) Report the implementation of duties to the head of the education office through the head of the education unit at least 1 (one) time in 1 (one) year.

The anti-violence policy has also been implemented to eliminate violence and discrimination between students and those committed by educators and education personnel (TU, security, school guards). Some of the punishments that have been eliminated include no more punishments in the form of punches, kicks, throwing, and even drying students are not carried out. The school picks up trash with the sound that it is everyone's obligation. Monitoring, supervision, and action to prevent violence at school are essential components of the principal's commitment to realizing child-friendly schools, ensuring a safe and nurturing environment where students' rights are respected and always protected. Through meetings, the principal always tells teachers not to give punishments that hurt both mentally and physically, although it can be said that the implementation is not systematic. Other forms of child-friendly commitment are using gadgets in the school environment, preventing students from dropping out by distributing BOS funds, facilitating intense communication between teachers and parents through WAG or directly, and promoting a smoke-free and drug-free area.

The commitment of all stakeholders, including educators, parents, and the community, is crucial to successfully implementing the child-friendly school policy. This commitment ensures that the policy is not just a document but is actively practised and integrated into the school culture ([Effendi & Supadi, 2023](#); [Pudyaningtyas et al., 2023](#)). Schools that demonstrate a solid commitment to child-friendly practices often engage in ongoing training and development for educators, ensuring they are equipped to uphold children's rights and foster a supportive learning environment. However, the most significant aspect of this commitment is the active participation of students in the learning process ([Darma et al., 2023](#); [Iskandar](#)

[et al., 2024](#)). By empowering them to contribute to developing school policies and practices, this participatory approach enhances students' sense of belonging and responsibility, making them feel engaged and integral to the school's operations. This fosters a more inclusive and collaborative educational environment that values their voices and perspectives, making them feel empowered ([Rimang et al., 2023](#)).

Based on the description above, while a written policy provides the necessary framework for a child-friendly school, the commitment of all stakeholders is equally important to realize this policy. The synergy between policy and practice ensures that schools can protect children's rights effectively and foster an environment that supports their holistic development. However, the success of this initiative depends on overcoming challenges through strategic planning, collaboration and continuous evaluation, providing reassurance about the effectiveness of the child-friendly school policy.

### **Child Rights-Trained Educators and Education Personnel**

Child-friendly schools are crucial in fostering an educational environment that prioritizes children's rights, ensuring safety, inclusivity, and support for holistic learning. These schools are designed to be spaces where students feel respected, protected, and encouraged to develop their full potential. Central to the success of child-friendly schools is the role of educators and education personnel. Teachers must be well-versed in children's rights and trained to implement practices that promote a safe, engaging, and nurturing learning atmosphere ([Ningrum et al., 2023](#)). A fun and safe learning environment makes students feel comfortable and motivated to participate in school activities ([Sholeh, 2021](#)). Human resources are thus fundamental to the success of child-friendly schools, as teachers and staff who understand child development and possess child-friendly characteristics are essential in creating a positive and inclusive educational setting ([Sholeh et al., 2021](#); [Riyanto et al., 2022](#)).

To equip educators with the necessary skills and knowledge, schools like SDN SN Karang Mekar Banjarmasin take part in training programs focused on children's rights and child-friendly practices. Local government agencies often support these initiatives, such as the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office of Banjarmasin City, which has organized socialization events for school personnel. For instance, the 2024 socialization of the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the BKD Hall aimed to elevate schools' capabilities from merely being 'willing' to being 'able' to organize children's rights. This form of training empowers teachers and administrative personnel and extends to the larger school community, including parents. A critical aspect of child-friendly education is the promotion of clean and healthy living behaviours, which is achieved by improving school infrastructure and monitoring food safety practices.

The school has made significant efforts to regulate food consumption by ensuring that only school-approved snacks are available for students. This is evident in the absence of food vendors outside the school premises, a strategy aimed at supporting the school canteen, which the school directly supervises. By controlling the food available to students, the school guarantees the quality and safety of the meals. This initiative is part of a broader effort to promote healthy and child-friendly eating habits, providing students access to nutritious meals within a safe and supervised environment. Ensuring that students have access to healthy food options supports their physical well-being and enhances their academic performance and overall development ([Patte et al., 2020](#); [Schätzer et al., 2021](#)).

However, despite these efforts, challenges must be addressed to ensure that food safety practices are consistently upheld. Unlicensed food vendors outside school premises continue to threaten maintaining a safe food environment for students. This issue underscores the need for stricter regulations and greater community

involvement in supporting the school's goals of creating a healthy, child-friendly environment. Moreover, SDN SN Karang Mekar 1 Banjarmasin has implemented strict smoking and drug use rules within the school premises. The school enforces zero-tolerance policies on drugs, and no incidents of smoking among teachers have been reported, highlighting the school's commitment to providing a safe and drug-free environment for students.

One of the critical obstacles to fully realizing child-friendly school standards is the need for consistent technical guidance and training on how to meet these standards. [Rofiah et al. \(2019\)](#) note that many schools still need more to implement child-friendly school practices properly. This issue is compounded by the fact that local government demands for implementing child-friendly schools outpace the concrete assistance provided by related agencies. With sufficient training and resources, schools can achieve the standards required to be considered child-friendly. The need for synergy between schools and government agencies is critical, as the success of child-friendly school programs relies heavily on adequate support and collaboration.

In conclusion, while progress has been made in promoting child-friendly education at SDN SN Karang Mekar 1 Banjarmasin, challenges remain, particularly regarding training and resources. Ensuring educators and staff are adequately trained in children's rights, regulating food safety practices, and maintaining a drug-free environment are essential to creating a supportive, child-centred learning atmosphere. Continued efforts to improve the quality of child-friendly schools will require enhanced collaboration between schools, local governments, and the broader community. By addressing these challenges and working together, the goal of establishing schools that respect and promote children's rights can be fully realized.

### **Child-Friendly Learning Process**

Efforts to protect children and prevent child abuse hold an essential role in educational environments, as children are the future assets of a nation that must be safeguarded and nurtured ([Mansir, 2022](#)). The learning process in child-friendly schools is often called a 'fun learning process,' aimed at engaging students and making education enjoyable and meaningful. However, more surveys or research are needed to measure this approach's effectiveness in schools precisely. One of the reasons for this gap is the overwhelming workload teachers face; as [Rofiah et al. \(2019\)](#) noted, School managers and educators are often consumed with running educational programs in line with the national curriculum while also being burdened with additional responsibilities, such as implementing child-friendly school policies.

Teachers play a pivotal role in ensuring the success of child-friendly learning environments. At SDN SN Karang Mekar 1, a 'fun learning process' has been successfully integrated into daily activities. This is evident in the school's unwavering commitment to building both academic and moral character, which is reinforced through morning *tadarus* activities, where students recite and memorize Quranic verses. This practice not only nurtures students' spiritual development but also fosters a positive and respectful school culture. Teachers in each class lead this activity every morning, demonstrating the school's steadfast commitment to its students' holistic development. According to [Sari et al. \(2012\)](#), positive behaviours such as academic achievement, ethical conduct, creativity, discipline, responsibility, and the development of good citizenship are key indicators of the success of such initiatives.

In addition to promoting academic and character development, child-friendly schools also emphasize socio-emotional growth. Socio-emotional development helps children adapt to the broader social world, enhancing their ability to form relationships and respond to various social situations ([Majdi, 2019](#)). At SDN SN Karang Mekar 1, integrating environmental management further contributes to a

positive school atmosphere. The school's grounds are shaded by trees and beautified with plants, creating a peaceful and safe environment for students. Importantly, trees are positioned away from play areas to ensure student safety. The school also instils environmentally friendly habits, such as keeping the environment clean and conserving water and energy, which have become a daily routine. This is consistent with [Mansir's \(2022\)](#) perspective that building a child protection system requires collaboration from all stakeholders. Each party, including educators, parents, and community members, must contribute their respective roles to create a protective and supportive environment for children.

The learning environment at SDN SN Karang Mekar 1 is free from violence, discrimination, and intimidation, which is crucial for fostering a sense of safety and motivation among students. Teachers at the school are committed to accommodating diverse learning styles and addressing the unique needs of all students, both academic and non-academic. By using a variety of instructional approaches—such as project-based learning, discussions, and role-playing—educators ensure that all students can fully engage with the lessons. These methods not only support cognitive development but also encourage the cultivation of tolerance, empathy, and cooperation, fostering socio-emotional learning.

Research supports these practices; as [Iskandar et al. \(2024\)](#) argue, schools should provide a safe, comfortable, clean environment to facilitate effective learning. [Abidin et al. \(2022\)](#) highlight that students who feel free to express their ideas and engage actively in the learning process tend to achieve better learning outcomes. Innovative teaching methods, such as child-centred classroom programs, allow students to explore, be creative, and connect deeply with the material, fostering a genuine love for learning ([Sunardianta et al., 2024](#)).

The fulfilment of child-friendly learning processes at SDN SN Karang Mekar 1 is mainly due to the strong commitment of educators and educational staff. [Jayanti and Rahmat \(2023\)](#) emphasize the critical role of educators and school staff, along with the active involvement of students in learning and decision-making processes, as essential factors in ensuring a positive, inclusive, and engaging learning experience for all students.

In conclusion, the integration of a child-friendly learning process at SDN SN Karang Mekar 1 has created a holistic environment where students' cognitive, emotional, and social development is nurtured. While challenges remain in balancing curriculum demands with child-friendly initiatives, the school's dedication to fostering a positive and inclusive learning experience ensures that students thrive both academically and personally. Continued support from educators, parents, and the wider community is not just vital, but integral in sustaining and further improving the effectiveness of these child-friendly educational practices.

### **Child-friendly Facilities and Infrastructure**

Child-friendly facilities and Infrastructure are pivotal in establishing a safe and conducive learning environment. The safety and accessibility of facilities are paramount to avoid potential hazards, such as ensuring that thorny plants are not present in areas frequented by students ([Yosada & Kurniati, 2019](#); [Panda et al., 2024](#)). One of the critical indicators within the education cluster is the provision of facilities and Infrastructure that promote creative and recreational activities, which must be accessible to all children ([Yuyun et al., 2022](#)). For instance, SDN SN Karang Mekar 1, located on Jalan Pangeran Antasari, Banjarmasin, offers various supporting facilities, though these vary in condition.

The child-friendly features at SDN SN Karang Mekar 1 include a prominently displayed school signboard visible to the public, signalling its commitment to creating a child-friendly environment. Regarding educational Infrastructure, the school provides a library and reading room accessible to all students, fostering literacy and

learning outside the traditional classroom setting. Additionally, the school has implemented essential safety measures such as an evacuation route and gathering points, ensuring student safety during emergencies. While sturdy and safe for students, the school building is relatively old and could benefit from modernization to align with contemporary child-friendly standards.

Other supportive facilities at the school include a clean, non-slip toilet, free from health hazards such as larvae in the water reservoir, though these toilets are not yet accessible to students with special needs. The school also provides handwashing stations, a prayer room (mushola), and a health unit (UKS), although the latter still requires improvement in equipment and Infrastructure. Furthermore, there is a small wooden staircase, which, while functional, may not be the most suitable or safe option for young students.

Child-friendly facilities significantly impact students' cognitive and emotional development by providing a conducive learning environment. For example, research shows that modern classrooms and well-equipped libraries enhance learning outcomes and student engagement ([Umar et al., 2024](#)). Ensuring these facilities are inclusive and discrimination-free is also essential to creating an equitable learning space ([Hasanah et al., 2024](#)). However, overcoming challenges in implementing such environments requires effective environmental management and active collaboration among stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and the broader community.

Despite these efforts, infrastructure readiness remains a challenge in many schools, as highlighted by a study conducted in Pekanbaru City ([Yuyun et al., 2022](#)). This research identified a gap between the standards for child-friendly facilities and their implementation, with many schools needing resources. Similar findings were reported by [Riyanto et al. \(2022\)](#), who identified limited school budgets and inadequate facilities as significant barriers to implementing child-friendly school policies. These challenges underscore the need for more comprehensive strategies to bridge the gap between policy and practice, ensuring that all schools can provide the safe, supportive environments children need to thrive.

In conclusion, while SDN SN Karang Mekar 1 has made notable strides toward child-friendly Infrastructure, there is still work to be done to fully meet the needs of all students, particularly those with special needs. Ongoing improvements to facilities and more significant investment in school infrastructure will be essential to realizing the full potential of child-friendly schools in Indonesia.

### **Child Participation in Child-friendly Schools**

Child participation in child-friendly schools is crucial for fostering an educational environment that is inclusive, respectful, and supportive of children's rights. This approach ensures that children are passive recipients of education and active contributors to their learning experiences. Participation involves including children's voices in decision-making processes and engaging them in various school activities that help shape their development ([Olsen, 2023](#)). In SDN SN Karang Mekar 1 Banjarmasin City, efforts to implement a child-friendly learning atmosphere are evident, but there are still areas for improvement. For example, while extracurricular and daily activities offer a platform for students to engage, a formal peer community allowing children to express their ideas collectively has yet to be established.

One of the main challenges in promoting child participation is the students' limited ability to provide constructive input on implementing child-friendly school programs. [Juwitasari \(2021\)](#) notes that students often need more confidence and proficiency in speaking skills, which affects their ability to express suggestions or problem-solving ideas. Many students remain silent during class discussions when allowed to ask questions or share opinions. This reluctance to participate can be attributed to a combination of factors, including fear of being judged, cultural norms discouraging open expression, and a general lack of self-confidence. Addressing these

barriers makes it easier for students to fully engage in the decision-making processes integral to creating a genuinely child-friendly school environment.

In addition to these challenges, it is tough for elementary school students to offer meaningful suggestions or feedback on broader school policies, such as the child-friendly school program. Interviews with teachers and administrators at SDN SN Karang Mekar 1 Banjarmasin City have revealed that students rarely provide feedback on the program's implementation. However, there are signs of participation at the classroom level, where students contribute to creating classroom rules and maintaining a clean school environment. For instance, students are involved in daily cleaning routines, instilling a sense of responsibility and collective ownership of their surroundings. Moreover, extracurricular activities such as Scouting, Futsal, Karate, and Dancing allow students to explore their talents, providing an outlet for creativity and personal development.

Despite these positive aspects, research indicates that children's involvement in the generation of ideas and decision-making remains limited ([Liestyasari et al., 2023](#)). While students actively participate in various school activities, their input often does not extend to influencing school policies or contributing to decision-making processes at higher levels. It is crucial that schools provide more structured opportunities for children to voice their opinions and engage in meaningful dialogue about the school environment. Encouraging children to participate in policy discussions not only empowers them but also nurtures essential life skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and social interaction. When children are actively involved in shaping their school environment, it creates a positive, inclusive atmosphere that supports both their academic and personal development.

Research also highlights the benefits of child participation in fostering self-esteem and confidence. According to [Saputri and Hasibuan \(2022; Kattam et al., 2024\)](#), child-friendly schools contribute to the development of children's self-confidence by creating an environment where they feel safe expressing their emotions and ideas. By participating in discussions and activities, children learn to articulate their thoughts, leading to a more confident and independent character. This environment also supports emotional growth, helping children become more resilient and better equipped to handle challenges in their academic and personal lives.

In conclusion, child participation in creating child-friendly schools is a comprehensive approach that involves not only policy development and educator training but also the active involvement of children, parents, and the community. By addressing the challenges that limit children's ability to fully participate—such as improving speaking skills and creating opportunities for meaningful input—schools can better support children's rights and foster their development. A collaborative effort between educators, students, and parents is crucial to ensure that the school environment is inclusive, non-violent, and empowering for all children.

## Conclusion

The implementation of Child-Friendly School at SDN SN Karang Mekar 1 is a written policy that includes anti-violence regulations and the school's commitment to creating a safe environment for children; training for educators on children's rights is proven to contribute significantly to the creation of a more friendly and secure educational environment for students; child-friendly learning processes promote an inclusive and non-violent learning atmosphere. Continuous training is essential for educators to create a fun and supportive learning environment; the school has child-friendly facilities, although some aspects, such as toilets for children with special needs, still need improvement. Increasing student participation in decision-making is still a priority. Schools must develop better mechanisms to actively involve students in decisions that affect them, such as through student discussion forums. Active student participation will help increase students' sense of responsibility and

ownership of the school environment and encourage early character development and leadership skills.

Recommendations from the findings of this study include the need for strengthening written policies and wider socialisation of Child-Friendly Schools, improving ongoing teacher training to support child-friendly learning, and improving facilities that support accessibility for children with special needs. In addition, student participation in school decision-making needs to be increased through forums that encourage their active involvement. Finally, schools together with the education office should conduct regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the implementation of child-friendly schools is effective and in accordance with the established standards, providing reassurance about the effectiveness of the implementation.

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