



STRATEGIES FOR INDEPENDENT CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDREN WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES AT USWATUN HASANAH ACEH FOUNDATION (CASE STUDY)

Muniruddin¹, Sri Suyanta², Mumtazul Fikri³

Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry

¹211003015@student.ar-raniry.ac.id*, ²sri.suyanta@ar-raniry.ac.id, ³mumtazulfikri@ar-raniry.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to examine strategies for fostering independent character in children with intellectual disabilities at the Uswatun Hasanah Orphanage in Aceh. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, using data collection techniques such as interviews, observation, and documentation. The research subjects included the orphanage's management, caregiving teachers, and children with special needs. The findings reveal that the character development strategies involve the application of habituation, role modeling, and positive reinforcement methods. The content of character education focuses on daily religious practices, moral behavior, and physical and social skills. The assessment of character development is conducted holistically, flexibly, and contextually, involving cross-sector collaboration with government institutions and professionals. Major challenges include the diverse conditions of the children, limited family support, the constrained capacity of educators, and financial limitations. To address these issues, the orphanage implements individualized approaches, a tiered and inclusive mentoring system, cross-sector collaboration, and partnerships with private donors. This study recommends the development of adaptive, systemic, and sustainable strategies to optimally foster independence in children with intellectual disabilities.

Keywords: Character development, Independence, Intellectual Disabilities, Uswatun Hasanah Orphanage, Aceh

*Corresponding authors



Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0
International License

Published by Teunuleh Research Center

A. Introduction

Mental disability is an important issue that is gaining more attention in the realm of education and health services in Indonesia. The term generally refers to individuals, particularly children, who have intellectual and adaptive limitations, which significantly affect their ability to carry out activities of daily living independently. However, in practice, the term mental disability also encompasses a spectrum of psychiatric and emotional conditions that impede an individual's social and cognitive functioning, such as the ability to learn, communicate, and establish healthy social interactions.

Medically, individuals with mental disabilities often experience impaired developmental mental function due to genetic, neurological, or psychosocial trauma factors (Putri, 2023; Selian, 2024). This condition can have an impact on their ability to understand basic concepts, make decisions, and complete simple tasks independently. In some cases, individuals with mental disorders who have undergone medical treatment and are recommended in stable condition still face social and functional barriers that require special attention, including in the field of education.

In this context, educational institutions have a strategic role in helping individuals with mental disabilities to achieve optimal levels of independence. The design of an adaptive curriculum and the preparation of life skills development programs are important instruments in directing them to be able to carry out their role as productive members of society.

Inclusive education that accommodates the needs of children with mental disabilities is a tangible reflection of the principles of justice and humanity in the national education system (M.M, 2019). Holistic education should include academic strengthening, confidence, independence, and social skills that are essential for their functioning in social life (Syalwa et al., 2025). This is in line with the goals of national education which emphasizes the importance of developing students' potential to become human beings who have faith, noble character, healthy, capable, independent, and responsible.

Furthermore, character education for children with mental disabilities also carries broad social implications. When people are invited to understand, appreciate, and include them in an equal social ecosystem, a culture that is more inclusive, tolerant, and respectful of diversity will be formed.

The existence of teachers in education cannot be reduced only as a delivery of learning materials. More than that, teachers have a moral and social responsibility in shaping the personality and character of students, especially for those with special needs. Teachers act as role models, guides, and motivators who consistently provide an empathetic and humanistic educational space. This is all the more important given that character building, including self-reliance, is an essential goal of national education.

In particular, caregiver teachers play a vital role in character development of children with mental disabilities, especially in the context of religious values-based education. This function goes beyond the technical teaching of worship or creed, but includes the internalization of moral values such as honesty, responsibility, compassion, discipline, and perseverance. This approach contributes greatly to building independent character in children with disabilities, who often face challenges in emotional regulation, decision-making, and social relationships.

The inclusive and personalized approach of the caregiver teacher allows children with disabilities to recognize their potential and develop independence according to their capacity. Strategies such as repetitive learning, exemplary models, and consistent positive reinforcement can be used to instill values such as discipline, caring, and responsibility. In this case, teachers also carry out the role of individual tutors who tailor their guidance to the specific needs of each child.

The empathetic and supportive learning environment formed by the caregiver teacher also contributes to the sense of acceptance and appreciation of the existence of children with disabilities in the educational community (Suwar et al., 2025). In such an atmosphere, children not only learn to live a more independent life, but also experience the process of internalizing religious values that are the foundation for building self-dignity. This independence, in turn, has a positive impact not only on the child himself, but also on the family and society.

The role of caregivers in strengthening independent character in children with mental disabilities reflects the synergy between the intellectual and moral dimensions of education (Andika, 2023). It is part of a transformative strategy to create an inclusive, equitable, and civilized society, where every individual, regardless of limitations, has the opportunity to develop optimally and live a meaningful life.

The importance of this role is reinforced by the fact that children with mental disabilities often have difficulty understanding lessons, carrying out daily activities such as eating or dressing, and establishing social relationships. Some even show aggressive behavior due to limitations in motor skills or emotional management. This situation demands an educational approach that is not only structurally inclusive, but also emotionally and psychosocially supportive.

Data from the 2018 Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) shows that around 3.3% of children aged 5–17 years in Indonesia experience a disability. The number of cases of Down syndrome – a form of intellectual disability – increased from 0.12% in 2010 to 0.21% in 2018. This figure indicates an increasing need for education that pays attention to the aspects of inclusion and effective character interventions (Anidi & Anlianna, 2022).

Ironically, amid the increasing number of people with disabilities, inhumane practices such as the confinement or confinement of individuals with mental disorders

are still found, especially in remote areas and some rehabilitation homes. According to a report by the Healthy Mental Health Association, more than 12,000 people with mental disabilities still experience detention and violence, without access to proper health services and education (Kompas, 2025). This fact not only violates human rights, but also reflects the weak collective awareness of the importance of educational approaches in dealing with mental disabilities.

Therefore, the presence of caregiver teachers who have empathy, patience, and pedagogical competence in the education of children with mental disabilities is very crucial. The strategies applied by the caregiver teacher must be flexible, adaptive, and oriented towards character development, especially the character of independence. These efforts need to be supported by appropriate learning planning, a safe learning environment, and active involvement in daily activities that form positive habits and life skills. Thus, the process of character formation is not only the task of educational institutions, but also a moral mandate that is carried out in a sustainable and transformative manner.

One of the institutions that shows real concern for the education and care of children with mental disabilities in Aceh is the Uswatun Hasanah Foundation, which is located in Keude Aron Hamlet, Kajhu Village, Baitussalam District, Aceh Besar Regency. This foundation is a model of integrated and inclusive education management by integrating formal institutions such as Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), Madrasah Aliyah (MAS), PAUD, and Kindergarten, as well as dayah (pesantren) and orphanages in one comprehensive educational ecosystem (Institution Profile, 2025).

The Uswatun Hasanah Foundation, in addition to providing formal education services, also serves as a residential and nurturing place for children with mental disabilities. They live an integrated life between learning activities at school and strengthening character in orphanages. Outside of school hours, these mentally disabled children receive special coaching, including regular recitation in the afternoon, evening, and after dawn, which focuses on religious values and basic life. Thus, this institution carries out a dual function: as a provider of formal education as well as a main actor in contextual character education.

The Uswatun Hasanah Orphanage was born as a response to social conditions after the tsunami tragedy and the conflict that hit Aceh. Over time, the orphanage developed into an inclusive institution, embracing orphans, the poor, and the mentally disabled in one cohesive community. One of the hallmarks of this foundation's approach is the integration of life between orphanage children and dayah students, which allows for healthy social interaction and the formation of values such as mutual respect, cooperation, and empathy across backgrounds.

In addition to providing basic needs such as shelter and food, the Uswatun Hasanah Foundation also pays special attention to strengthening the character and *life skills* needed by children to be independent in the future. Values such as responsibility, honesty, hard work, and gratitude are instilled in a strong Islamic atmosphere. The religious education that is applied is not only dogmatic, but functions as a medium for the formation of character and identity, especially for children with disabilities who often face stigma and social isolation.

On the basis of this uniqueness, partisanship, and holistic parenting model, the Uswatun Hasanah Orphanage was chosen as the location for the research. This institution has a different approach from ordinary orphanages, which is by combining formal, religious, and parenting education in one sustainable system. In addition, the active involvement of caregivers in the daily coaching of children with mental disabilities provides ample space for researchers to examine in depth the character education strategies applied, especially in forming independent character.

With a complex but supportive social background, as well as a strong spirit of empowerment, the Uswatun Hasanah Foundation is a relevant and significant location to explore best practices in character development of children with mental disabilities. The research at this location is expected to make a conceptual and practical contribution to the development of character education in orphanages, as well as strengthen the inclusive education discourse in Indonesia.

Various previous studies have examined educational strategies and character building for children with special needs, including children with mental disabilities. (Chan et al., 2019) Highlight teachers' strategies in overcoming learning difficulties in elementary school. They found that teachers need to create a conducive and enjoyable learning atmosphere through the use of discussion, audio-visual, and practical methods, as well as rewarding students as an effort to increase learning motivation.

In a more specific context, (Khaira et al., 2023) researching the strategies of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in developing independent character in children with disabilities at SLB YPPC Banda Aceh. The strategies used include self-development learning, example, and habituation. This research emphasizes the importance of the role of teachers in shaping independent character in a contextual and sustainable manner.

Research (Nikmah et al., 2023) Reveal various problems faced in fostering the independence character of children with special needs, including aspects of teachers, students, curriculum, school management, infrastructure, and cooperation. Despite facing challenges, teachers still strive to foster student independence through various approaches.

Research (Sa'adah, 2020) discussed the character education curriculum for students with disabilities at SLB Islam Qothrunnada. He found that the curriculum

implemented was different from public schools and emphasized the importance of teachers' consistency in the application of character values, especially through habituation and example. (Mumpuniati, 2016) Explains that the independent character of students with intellectual disabilities is shown through their ability to solve daily life problems functionally and adaptively, both in the family, school, and community environments. This independence is considered a form of actualization of human values. In the article (Rafif & Hasan, 2020), the formation of independent character is developed through the habitual learning approach, which is the habituation of simple activities such as prayer, which is carried out consistently to train the physical and spiritual independence of children with mental disabilities.

From these various studies, it can be concluded that the formation of independent character in children with mental disabilities requires adaptive pedagogical strategies, a consistent approach through example and habituation, and an inclusive and empathetic educational environment. However, there have not been many studies that specifically examine the role of caregiver teachers in the context of Islamic-based orphanages that at the same time manage formal education such as the Uswatun Hasanah Aceh Foundation. Therefore, this research is here to fill this gap by focusing on the strategies of caregivers in developing the independent character of mentally disabled children in the orphanage environment.

B. Method

This research is a field research with a qualitative descriptive approach. This approach is used to describe in depth the strategies of caregivers in developing independent character in children with mental disabilities at the Uswatun Hasanah Aceh Orphanage. The research location is at the Uswatun Hasanah Aceh Foundation which is located at Jalan Laksamana Hayati Km 8.5, Keude Aron Hamlet, Kajhu Village, Baitussalam District, Aceh Besar Regency (Institution Profile, 2025).

The main data sources in this study were obtained from in-depth interviews with one orphanage leader, two male caregivers, and one female caregiver. In addition, three children with mental disabilities are also important subjects in exploring the dynamics of character development in the orphanage environment. This intensive interaction between caregivers and children is the focal point in understanding the process of forming independent character that takes place on a daily basis. To complete the primary data, the researcher also collected secondary data sourced from internal documents of the orphanage, such as student data, caregiver teacher profiles, and daily activity records. In addition, supporting literature in the form of books, journal articles, and other relevant references was also studied to strengthen the theoretical and analytical foundations in this study.

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, direct observation of coaching activities, and documentation of archives and records available at the orphanage. Interviews are conducted openly to explore information naturally and contextually, while observations are used to observe firsthand how strategies are applied in children's daily lives. Documentation is a complement that strengthens the validity of findings in the field.

Data analysis in this study follows three main stages, namely data collection, data reduction, and data presentation (Setiawan, 2018). Once the data is collected, the researcher filters the relevant information and organizes it systematically so that it can be thoroughly interpreted. The presentation of data was carried out in the form of narrative descriptive to describe the patterns and meanings that emerged from the interaction between caregivers and children with mental disabilities.

To maintain the validity of the data, the researcher applied observation and triangulation diligence techniques. Observation diligence is carried out by observing parenting activities repeatedly and in sufficient time to gain a deep understanding. Meanwhile, triangulation is carried out by comparing data from various sources and collection techniques to ensure the consistency and correctness of the information obtained.

C. Finding and Discussion

1. Caregiver Teacher Strategies in Developing the Independent Character of Children with Mental Disabilities

The strategy of developing independent character in this orphanage begins with a planning approach that adapts to the individual needs of children with mental disabilities. The caregiver teachers arrange structured and meaningful daily activities, ranging from early morning wake-up activities, worship, studying, to simple social activities. Each activity is designed so that children get used to carrying out their own tasks, such as bathing, putting on clothes, and making the bed (MI Interview, 2025).

Caregivers also instill the values of independence through habituation and example methods. Exemplary is seen in the patient and disciplined attitude of caregivers who consistently go through routines with children, so that these values are naturally embedded. Other strategies used are personal dialogue, praise, and motivational reinforcement to encourage children to be confident and feel appreciated for their achievements, no matter how small.

In its implementation, caregivers also integrate religious values as the basis for character formation. Spiritual activities such as congregational prayers, prayer readings, and regular recitation are a means to instill the values of discipline, responsibility, and

sincerity. Children are invited to understand the meaning of each religious activity as part of character building, not just a ritual routine (MIK Interview, 2025).

The coaching strategies carried out by the caregiver teachers showed a real positive impact. Children who were originally very dependent are now starting to show the ability to do personal activities independently. They are also more confident, open to interacting with others, and begin to understand the values of responsibility in daily life. One caregiver mentioned that these children even showed enthusiasm to help their friends who were still struggling, which signified a growth in empathy and social responsibility.

These results are in line with the findings (Rafif & Hasan, 2020) which shows that the formation of independent character in children with mental disabilities can be developed through habits that are carried out repeatedly. Meanwhile, the habituation and exemplary approach found in this study also confirmed the results of the study (Khaira et al., 2023) About the development of independent character of children with disabilities through self-development guidance.

In addition, the uniqueness of the context of the Uswatun Hasanah Aceh Foundation which integrates formal education, spiritual life, and nurturing in one environment makes this coaching process more comprehensive. Children are not only nurtured cognitively, but also emotionally and spiritually formed. This also reinforces the findings (Sa'adah, 2020) Regarding the importance of consistency and spiritual environment in character education for children with disabilities.

2. Coaching Materials and Methods

Efforts to develop independent character for children with mental disabilities at the Uswatun Hasanah Aceh Orphanage are carried out through a structured and individual-oriented approach. The caregiver teacher plays a central role in this process by applying coaching methods that are not only instructional in nature, but also emphasize personal attention, patience, and a deep understanding of the psychological condition of foster children.

One of the main approaches applied is the habituation method, especially in daily worship activities such as praying five times, ablution, reading short prayers, chanting the azan, and reciting (Observation, 2025). This activity not only strengthens the spiritual aspect, but also serves as an exercise in discipline, order, and personal responsibility. These activities are trained gradually and repeatedly until children get used to carrying them out independently. The results of the observations showed that the children began to show an improvement in carrying out worship without intensive assistance, which indicates the effectiveness of this method in building independence.

The exemplary method is also an important part of the coaching process. Caregiver teachers consciously demonstrate positive behaviors such as patience, good manners, and

compassion. Children with cognitive limitations tend to learn through observation, so this example becomes an effective strategy. Observations show that children begin to imitate the good behavior of caregivers in daily life, such as saying greetings, helping each other, and maintaining cleanliness.

In addition, positive reinforcement methods are used to reinforce emerging independent behaviors. The form of appreciation given includes verbal praise, a smile, or a small gift, which has been shown to be effective in building a child's confidence and motivation. Caregivers revealed that praise for positive behaviors, such as being able to pray alone or helping friends, has a great effect on children's enthusiasm for learning and behavior changes.

In terms of material, independent character development is focused on three main domains: daily worship activities, noble moral practices, and supporting activities such as sports and life skills. These materials are contextual, relevant to daily life, and adjusted to each child's capacity for comprehension.

Daily worship activities are the central point of coaching materials. Children are trained to perform prayers, ablutions, prayers, and recitals on a regular basis, both in joint sessions and special learning outside of school hours. This activity aims to form discipline, consistency, and personal responsibility through continuous spiritual habituation.

The next material focuses on the practice of noble morals, such as speaking politely, respecting others, apologizing, being honest, maintaining cleanliness, and helping others. This process is carried out repeatedly and is instilled through verbal explanations, direct examples, and reinforcement when good behavior is shown by children. For example, when eating together, children are invited to queue, read prayers, and clean the cutlery after use. These simple practices become an effective medium for the internalization of moral values naturally.

In addition to these core materials, supporting activities such as sports and life skills are also an important part of supporting the formation of independent character. Children are invited to do activities such as planting, learning silat, and light sports. This activity not only provides variation in the learning process, but also trains perseverance, motor coordination, and increases children's psychological comfort and confidence (Observation, 2025).

The foundation's commitment to supporting this coaching strategy is also the main strength. Coaching is carried out in stages and stages, starting from kindergarten to MA levels, with an inclusive approach that combines children with disabilities and non-disabilities in one educational environment. Structural support from the orphanage leaders and consistent coaching programs make the methods and materials applied effective and meaningful in shaping the independent character of children with mental disabilities.

3. Evaluation of Independent Character Development

Assessment in character education, especially for children with mental disabilities, cannot be equated with an evaluative approach in general education. The main emphasis is not on cognitive achievement alone, but on the affective and psychomotor dimensions that reflect the development of attitudes, habits, and overall independence of children. In this context, assessment has a dual function: as a monitoring tool as well as a reflection for improving coaching methods that are more adaptive to the individual needs of children.

At the Uswatun Hasanah Aceh Orphanage, assessments of independent character development are carried out in a personal, sustainable, and contextual manner (Observation and Documentation, 2025). The caregiver teacher becomes the main actor in this process, relying on direct observation of the child's daily behavior changes. The main focus of the assessment includes the child's ability to carry out daily activities independently, improvement in carrying out worship, communication skills, and the quality of social interaction. For this reason, each caregiver teacher first conducts an in-depth introduction to the condition of each child, considering that the background of the disorder and their characteristics are very varied. By understanding the specific needs of each child, the coaching process can be directed with a more effective and targeted approach.

Evaluations are carried out regularly, generally monthly, and the results of the assessment are used to adjust the coaching methods and materials provided. This evaluation process is not only internal, but also involves external collaboration (NT Interview, 2025). The foundation collaborates with institutions such as the Social Service, the Education Office, as well as professionals such as psychologists and psychiatrists. This cross-sectoral collaboration strengthens the validity and sustainability of coaching programs, while ensuring that coaching runs within a standardized framework.

The assessment method used is also creative and adjusted to the learning ability of children with mental disabilities. One of the strategies applied is a rhythm and song-based approach, especially in memorization activities. This approach helps children remember information more easily and reduces the chance of forgetting. This reflects the caregiver's deep understanding of the learning characteristics of the children in their care, as well as their ability to innovate in creating effective and enjoyable learning media.

A safe and emotionally supportive learning environment is also an integral part of the assessment process. Activities such as sports, planting, and martial arts are not only intended as a form of recreation, but also serve as indicators of motor development and independence of children. In this case, the child's emotional comfort is also considered as one of the evaluative parameters.

The assessment is also carried out formally and structured in collaboration with government agencies. Every three months, the foundation together with the Social Service and the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office (DP3A) conduct a thorough evaluation of the character development and independence of children with mental disabilities in orphanages. This external evaluation strengthens program accountability while also being a form of oversight that encourages continuous improvement.

Furthermore, the evaluation process is also integrated into the education level managed by the foundation. Children who show significant development of independence since the kindergarten/RA level are directed to continue to the Integrated MI level. At the MTs and MA levels, children with developing mental disabilities are directed to run learning programs with minimal supervision, and evaluations are carried out more independently (NT Interview, 2025). At this stage, the role of the caregiver teacher begins to shift to facilitator and evaluator, while children are given space to actualize their independence more broadly in social and educational contexts.

With an evaluation approach that is holistic, contextual, and collaborative, the Uswatun Hasanah Aceh Orphanage has built an independent character development system that is not only focused on individual achievements, but also on a comprehensive transformation in the aspects of attitudes, spirituality, and social interaction of children with mental disabilities.

4. Challenges and Solutions in Independent Character Development

The development of independent character in children with mental disabilities at the Uswatun Hasanah Aceh Orphanage is inseparable from various complex challenges that originate from internal and external conditions of the institution. However, behind each of these challenges, caregivers and the foundation continue to strive to formulate adaptive solutions that are contextual and oriented to the real needs of children.

One of the main challenges faced is the heterogeneity of the condition of children with mental disabilities themselves. Each child has a different background of disorders, which demands a coaching approach that is individual and cannot be generalized

(Interview RY, 2025). Some children are easy at memorization, but have difficulty communicating or maintaining focus; while others are calm but have severe cognitive barriers. This difference requires caregivers to constantly adjust their coaching strategies flexibly. The role of caregivers in this context is not only as an educator, but also as a sensitive and empathetic observer of the individual needs of children.

Another challenge arises from the lack of family support. Most of the children in the orphanage come from families with vulnerable social and economic conditions, so the presence and involvement of families in the coaching process is very limited. As a result, the child's emotional and social responsibilities are entirely in the hands of the caregivers. This adds to the psychological and professional burden for caregivers who must simultaneously play the role of a parent figure.

Not only that, the limited capacity of caregivers in handling cases of severe disabilities is another significant challenge. Not all caregivers have a background in exceptional education or the handling of complex mental disorders. In some cases, children exhibit behaviors that require specialized interventions beyond standard pedagogical abilities. This challenge shows the need for professional training or assistance from more competent experts.

Financial conditions are also quite a crucial obstacle. Although the coaching program has been prepared in a planned manner, there are often policy changes from the government that have an impact on funding instability. Coaching activities such as skills training, supplementary feeding, or the procurement of learning aids can be disrupted due to the cessation of the allocation of funds that have been promised. Dependence on the government budget makes institutions vulnerable to bureaucratic and policy dynamics.

In response to these challenges, the Uswatun Hasanah Orphanage implemented a number of strategic solutions that were practical and contextual. In the face of different children's conditions, caregivers develop an individualized approach through creative methods, such as turning memorized materials into fun songs or rhythms (RY Interview, 2025). This approach not only eases the learning process, but also creates a warm emotional connection between the child and the caregiver.

To overcome the lack of family support, the foundation collaborates with various agencies, such as the Social Service, DP3A, Puskesmas, to professionals such as psychologists and psychiatrists (NT Interview, 2025). This cross-sectoral collaboration provides more comprehensive support, both in terms of health services, education, and program monitoring. The presence of external parties also strengthens the evaluation system and ensures that the coaching process runs in accordance with the standards that have been set.

In the face of the limitations of the competence of caregivers, the foundation designed a tiered and inclusive coaching system, in which children with disabilities are not separated exclusively, but are involved in activities with other children. This strategy allows for a natural social learning process, where children with disabilities can learn from the surrounding environment gradually. Coaching is carried out from the kindergarten/RA to MA levels, with a mentoring pattern that is adjusted at each level.

Meanwhile, to overcome financial problems, the foundation is actively building partnerships with private donors as an alternative source of funding. Although not the main source, the presence of donors is very important, especially when government assistance is experiencing obstacles. This support allows coaching programs to continue to run continuously and not be disturbed by the dynamics of public policy. Furthermore, community involvement through donations also strengthens the value of social solidarity for children with special needs.

Overall, the challenges in fostering the independent character of mentally disabled children at the Uswatun Hasanah Aceh Orphanage are indeed complex and multidimensional. However, with a collaborative spirit, an empathetic approach, and strategic innovation, these challenges can be turned into opportunities to create a more inclusive, adaptive, and meaningful coaching system for the future of children with mental disabilities.

D. Conclusion

Independent character development for children with mental disabilities at the Uswatun Hasanah Aceh Orphanage shows that a holistic, adaptive, and empathetic approach is the main key in supporting their independent development. The methods applied by the caregiver teachers include habituation, example, and positive reinforcement combined with contextual and relevant coaching materials, such as daily worship activities, noble moral practices, and supporting activities in the form of sports and life skills. This approach not only targets the cognitive aspect, but also emphasizes the affective and psychomotor dimensions as an integral part of character formation.

Character assessments are carried out in a continuous and personalized manner, paying attention to the development of children's behavior as a whole. Evaluations are carried out by caregivers regularly and supported by external parties such as social services and professionals to ensure accountability and effectiveness of the coaching program. In addition, the implementation of an inclusive and tiered coaching system strengthens the process of internalizing the values of independence in children gradually and in a structured manner.

However, the implementation of this program is inseparable from various challenges, including differences in children's characteristics and needs, lack of family

support, limited capacity of caregivers to handle complex cases, and financial constraints influenced by policy dynamics. To answer these challenges, the foundation developed a number of strategic solutions, such as the application of an individualized approach, cross-sector collaboration, strengthening inclusive and tiered systems, and building a network of private donors as alternative resources.

Bibliography

- Andika, R. D. (2023). *The Dynamics of the Role of Accompanying Teachers in Improving Social-Emotional Development for Children with Disabilities at SKH Muara Sejahtera South Tangerang* [bachelorThesis, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication Sciences, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta]. <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/75832>
- Anidi, and Anlianna. (2022). *The Problem of Children with Intellectual Disabilities and Mental Disabilities in Schools*. *Journal of Education*, 2(3), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.57250/ajup.v2i3.134>
- Chan, F., Pamela, I. S., Sinaga, I. S., Mesariani, M., Oktarina, R., & Julianti, M. (2019). *TEACHERS' STRATEGIES IN OVERCOMING LEARNING DIFFICULTIES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL*. *AULADUNA: Journal of Islamic Basic Education*, 6(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.24252/auladuna.v6i2a8.2019>
- Khaira, T., Jamali, Y., Fikri, M., & Sukino, A. (2023). *PAI Teachers' Strategies in Developing the Independent Character of Blind Children at SLB YPPC Banda Aceh*. *PIONEER: JOURNAL OF EDUCATION*, 12(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.22373/pjp.v12i2.19398>
- Compass. (2025, July 14). *Tens of Thousands of Mentally Disabled Persons Tortured in Social Institutions*. *Kompas.id*. <https://www.kompas.id/artikel/belasan-ribu-penyandang-disabilitas-mental-disiksa-di-panti-sosial>
- M.M, D. W., S. E. (2019). *Elementary School Inclusive Education Management*. Medium Pregnancy.
- Mumpuniati, M. (2016). *FORMATION OF INDEPENDENT CHARACTER FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN A HUMANITARIAN CAPACITY*. *Journal of Education Development: Foundations and Applications*, 4(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.21831/jppfa.v4i1.12114>
- Nikmah, F., Chamdani, M., & Suryandari, K. C. (2023). *Learning Problems in Fostering Independence Character in Children with Special Needs Grade III SD Negeri 2 Pejagoan Academic Year 2021/2022*. *Kalam Cendekia: Scientific Journal of Education*, 11(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.20961/jkc.v11i1.63804>

- Putri, D. S. (2023). The Relationship between Cognitive Level and Activity Daily Living (ADL) Ability in Children with Intellectual Disabilities at SLB Reskiani [Other, Hasanuddin University]. <https://repository.unhas.ac.id/id/eprint/31249/>
- Rafif, A. A., & Hasan, I. (2020). Implementation of Habitual Learning for Persons with Mental Disabilities at Ainul Yakin Islamic Boarding School, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta. *The Indonesian Conference on Disability Studies and Inclusive Education*, 1, 63–80.
- Sa'adah, M. (2020). CHARACTER EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT THE QOTHRUNNADA ISLAMIC SPECIAL SCHOOL (SLB) [Other, ALMA ATA UNIVERSITY YOGYAKARTA]. <http://almaata.ac.id>
- Selian, S. N. (2024). *Psychology of Children with Special Needs*. Syiah Kuala University Press.
- Setiawan, A. A., Johan. (2018). *Qualitative research methodology*. Publisher Footprint CV.
- Suwar, A., Mulyani, & Athal, T. (2025). Analysis of Student Alienation in Learning. *Arini: Journal of Scientific and Teacher Innovation Works*, 2(1), article 1. <https://doi.org/10.71153/arini.v2i1.189>
- Syalwa, A. T., Aulia, A., & Anam, A. S. (2025). THE ROLE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION. *Qolamuna: Islam, Education, Literacy and Humanities*, 2(1), Article 1.