

## Educational Management Action Program for Pre-School



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**ABSTRACT:** The purpose of this study aims to describe the strategies used by school principals and educators in group planning, learning management and effective assessment during the pandemic and post-Covid-19 pandemic at the age of 5 to 6 years were applied at TK Al Azhar 037 Banjarbaru and TKIT Robbani Banjarbaru. This study uses a qualitative approach with a multisite method. Collecting data through interviews, observation and documentation. The data processed are from reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study is that educator empowerment strategy was carried out through the involvement of educators in planning, managing, fun-enjoyed, safety and student-friendly learning, and conducting effective assessments. The facility and infrastructure empowerment strategy is carried out through planning, task sharing and setting priority so that the used of media, facilities and infrastructure can be optimally and distributed. Strategies for parent empowerment through parent involvement in parenting, parent-community, and administration of Early Development Screening (DDTK).

**KEYWORDS:** Pre-school, learning management, educator empowerment strategy, facilities and infrastructure empowerment strategy, strategy for parent empowerment.

### INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education has a fundamental role in social and educational views. Education for young children has a significant influence and contributes to form self-confidence, motivation to learn which is beneficial in the social and economic aspects of individuals in the future (Katz 2000; Elliot 2006) in (Sim, 2015). Students at 4-6 years old are in pre-operational period where children are in the symbolic thinking phase. Children have the ability to imagine, explore, interact with teachers, friends and the school environment. Education in EC plays an important role and as a means of forming social intelligence and emotional intelligence so that they are able to interact in the community environment which is used as a provision for their future life (Tabroni, Hardianty, & Sari, 2022).

Since pandemic covid-19 outbreak, learning patterns transformation have a significant impact and critical stages to early childhood development. Face-to-face learning becomes a crucial phase due to the lack of face-to-face contact and teaching of various educational services (Baytiyeh, 2018; Saavedra, 2020) in (Dayal & Tiko, 2020). Changes in learning patterns also impacted the parents in adapted and preparing for online learning. Thus, the teacher readiness to plan, implement and conduct assessments to the children. Teachers inexperienced to applied computers to prepare learning plans to assess learning outcomes as well as limited number of computers (Rohita, 2020). Based on UNESCO data, in 2021 only around 20% of educators in Asia have attended training using online course and are capable of implementing online platform (UNICEF, 2021).

Both online and offline learning is transform to the conditions and circumstances of the school with WAG patterns, home visits, shifts, TVRI broadcasts and zoom (Aprianti & Sugito, 2022). Educators need a strategy in managing the class to achieve effective learning outcomes. Teachers are not only pay attention to devices and physical learning sense but also recognize the psychosocial of early childhood (Rejeki & Suwardi, 2019).

Effective learning is an integrated aspect that is prepared by the teacher provision of learning space, preparation of visual aids and being able to maintain a pleasant learning climate. According to Keller (2010) in (Adevita & Widodo, 2021), the growth of children's motivation and interest in learning one way is by designing a comfortable learning environment. The advantageous environment motivate children to learn enthusiastic, analytic, collaborative and communicative (Arianti, 2017). A Learning environment is one of the beneficial factors that has vast impact on learning motivation. Initiatives learning through online media is intrinsically influenced by children's enthusiasm or curiosity in mastering new skills and cognitive. Salim et.al (2021) argued that EC educators are require determined, initiative, and creativity to organizing learning process that enjoyable and fascinating educative process through ICT. ICT based learning according to Claxton et al. (2013), could stimulate curiosity, exploration, adventurous, tenacity, and improve their learning abilities independently (Fox-Turnbull, 2019). Then EC educators should present learning processes, methods, student responses to material learning and well-being (Pramana, 2020). Organizing curriculum under any circumstances through learning strategy scheme as a EC educator plan of action.

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Adevita and Widodo (2021) argued that family supportive and good environment during pandemic such as giving encouragement in the form of praise, stimulus, preserve a conducive environment, learning through play has enormous advantages to children in completing their tasks. Family has a significant role to facilitate within stimulate the learning from home with educational media initially taught by teacher. Thus, there are several reports stating that parents have excessive supervision of children's use of gadgets during a pandemic (Geddes and Marsh, 2021; Richtel, 2021; Schmidt et al., 2020) in (UNICEF, 2021). ICT as supportive media is necessary, but if they are used excessively without any supervision, will lead children concentration and discipline suddenly decrease.

Based on preliminary studies at TK Al Azhar 037 and TKIT Robbani, Banjarbaru, it was obtained evidence that students have experienced several issues along student, teacher and family side. Student issued such as low motivation of learning, it is showed a lack of enthusiasm and did not pay attention to the teacher's directions and instructions. Furthermore, it is indicate poor concentration and easily distracted considering of short-term learning session. From the educator's sides, the evidence suggest which has difficulties managing the class, organizing various kinds of games, and engaged the assessment process. From the parents' point of view, the barrier of preparation learning materials and communication skills of their kids. The evidence seems relevant in ECE system in U.S. might disorganized which uncoordination across sectors implicates for children and parents and for providers (Barnett, Grafwallner, & Weisenfeld, 2021).

According to Regulation of Ministry Education, Cultural, Reseach and Technology No. 137 of 2014 mention that learning management include activities of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating. Learning management was conducted by Ramdhayani et.al (2016), there is a relationship between the teacher's ability to manage the learning environment on early childhood learning motivation. EC learning accomplish mostly influenced by the teacher's ability to manage the educational environment including setting good space, arranging class rooms, maintaining a feasible learning environment, and preparing equipment for learning activities. Effective process of learning at ECE will effective depends on how the education ecosystem supports and manages learning process properly.

Furthermore, (Fox-Turnbull, 2019) mention that the role of educators in pandemic also covers how managing ICT learning, while the role of educators in learning during a pandemic is far more crucial and different from normal learning. (Dayal & Tiko, 2020) argue that ICT-based learning provides opportunities for children to connect with teachers and classmates during online.

Previous research was limited in seeing the collaboration of principals, educators and parents partially in supporting the learning process that is absolutely necessary. Based on the explanation above, it is very necessary to do research on school ecosystem empowerment strategies carried out by school principals and educators in noticing student-centered educational management.

### METHOD

This research is a qualitative research approach with a multi-site approach, which has similar characteristics concern to develop theories from various research backgrounds so the theory can be constructed, generally-applied and validity allowed. The approach used is a modified analytical and constant comparative method (Merriam, 2009).

This research technique uses purposive sampling with key informants. Data collecting using structured-interview with triangulation technique with in interview, documentation, data report, observation, and voice recorder. The subjects were principals and teachers in TK Al Azhar 037 Banjarbaru and TKIT Robbani Banjarbaru. Reseach sites has in common of an A accreditation, Islamic-based of ECE, accomplish with online/hybrid/face-to-face learning during pandemic, and school foundation contributions. Voice recorder has been used to encourage this research along with key informant reconciliation (Yin, 2018). The testing technique in this study was carried out using a combination observation based on the research protocol and using triangulation techniques. Triangulation techniques are used so that evidence on findings can be analyzed and interpreted by triangulating informants, data sources or data collection methods. The validity test is based on credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Moleong, 2019).

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

Pandemic era has changes educator perspectives on how planning, organizing the classroom, educational process assessment and evaluation. Educator plays main roles of presenting creative and innovative learning in accordance with children's interests and talents. Interesting learning according to Maesarah (2013) relates to interesting methods so as to achieve the desired competency (Trisnadewi, 2021). Online learning requires communication devices in the learning process in the form of facilities and infrastructure. Selection of appropriate facilities can make it easier for students to understand the material presented (Megasari, 2014) in (Trisnadewi, 2021). In addition to teaching methods, educators need support for facilities to support the smooth learning process (Sanjaya, 2010).

In carrying out their duties as professional educators, educators must have commitment to the organization. Commitment to the organization is influenced by a healthy organizational climate so that it influences the performance of educators within the organization in order to improve school quality towards leading schools (Aslamiah, 2019).

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Based on the findings of research data on two sites, information was obtained that learning management during the Covid-19 pandemic for the children at 5-6-year-old level required a strategy and collaborative efforts of school principals, educators and parents in optimizing the growth and development of children in their lesson.

### A. EC Educator Empowerment Strategy

When a school pays attention to develop children's creativity, there are six conditions that should be met by the school and all its components to reduce pressure and worry on children, teachers believe in the importance of positive feelings towards school, treating others with concern and mutual respect, and building self-confidence among children (Isen, Daubman, & Nowicki, 1987). The existence of a level of play in the playground before learning in early childhood has a positive correlation in assignments or in early childhood terminology is learning while playing (Lundy & Smith, 2020). It can be concluded that children who have a lot of levels of playing activity will feel comfortable in the learning process. Physical activity is needed to develop psychomotor, language, and cognitive skills. Free play activities amongst peers, some are carried out in a structured way through gymnastics. We often see children aged 4–6 years doing gymnastics together by moving to the rhythm (Akamoglu, et al., 2019). Argued that exercise is vigorous support of cognitive health (Gomez-Pinilla & Hilman, 2013); physical exercise need control motor and have influence to cognitive abilities (Palmer, Miller, & Robinson, 2013).

Regarding to research, we observed that the physical exercise was carried out for 30 minutes based on certain periods such as running, throwing, jumping and other motor activities. This findings relate to the interviews with class B teachers at one of the sites:

"Before morning activities, children are allowed to play on the playground or in class using educational tools according to their preferences. Morning activities are carried out in open spaces in the form of physical activities to hone children's psychomotor skills with gymnastic activities accompanied by several songs. This activity aims to expose the children under the morning sun to obtain Vitamin D while at the same time increasing the children's mood to be ready to take part in activities." (sites 1)

The pandemic condition has reduced children's opportunities to learn habitually. School principals took the initiative to intensively involve EC educators in the annual performance program in pandemic which is held once a year by formulating the educational needs of children aged 5-6 years through basic competencies and preparation curriculum. The principal and the management team participation according to Al-Kubaisi et.al (2022) in supporting team management of educational institutions explicitly includes the phases: school diagnosis, planning, control of implementation, and evaluation of processes, results and impacts (Armstrong-Mensah et al. al., 2020; Alharbi et.al (2020).

In annual meeting program, educators plan programs and curriculum based on that are adapted to the school context. Learning planning must be adapted to the local culture. Learning planning based on local culture is based on learning plans made based on themes that are around the child, the material selected is according to the age characteristics of the young children and refers to material in the local culture, and learning must interesting and fun (Novitawati & Anggreani, 2022). Learning planning during a pandemic is related to educator readiness for ICT. Educators' mastery of ICT apart from providing a variety of entertainment education throughout various media, also makes it easier to find relevant information in preparing learning and assessing learning outcomes (Rohita, 2020). The role of educators in curriculum development is a determining factor in early childhood development (Sood, 2003).

The success of learning during a pandemic is inseparable from the role of educators in presenting quality learning, this is in line with the results stated by UNESCO (2020b) in (Hasbi, 2022), pandemic conditions provide opportunities and momentum for educators to provide quality teaching by adjusting the teaching curriculum, learning, and assessment that have been generic into individual assessments. Otherwise, Goldring & Huff (2008) argued that principals should have allocated more time to focus on instructional leadership compared to managerial and leader activities. Quality teaching in favor of students needs to be made collaborative efforts between school principals and educators.

Based on the research findings, that collaboration is a one of strategy to empowering EC educators to have a comprehensive understanding of learning preparation that is appropriate to the stages of child development. By considering planning, hopefully educators will be able to prepare annual program, semester program, weekly activity plan, daily activity plan, and also executing and be able to carry out assessments in accordance with the child's developmental achievements.

Based on the interviews and observations, evidence was found that the curriculum has been designed according to Islamic values, using Tilawati/Wafa' method, focused on strengthening literacy and psychomotor activities with providing a variety of games. Alharbi & Azahrani (2020) mention that offering kids with various play is more essential things to optimizing development phase of young children besides direct academic instructional. This was done because the results of the assessment during the pandemic was decreasing, and it was feared that it would impact the development of children's achievements.

At the beginning of 2022, the new paradigm curriculum aka Merdeka Curriculum is still being studied and adapted to the conditions of educational units that school learn to apply essential values based on category 1 (self-learning phase). Educational regulations still require curriculum guidance and direction that is aligned with Islamic values by the foundation met the Merdeka

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Curriculum. This is in line with the results of research Ranjha et.al (2019) regarding the implementation of new curriculum in elementary schools in Punjab require plan guidelines so that school guide teachers teach according to the content in support for achieving learning outcomes.

In order to maintain the quality of learning, the principal plays a role in supervising learning in an effort to find out and evaluate the learning carried out by educators. This is used in evaluating and making decisions in fostering and increasing the competence of ECE. Learning supervision is part of educational supervision where academic supervision, administrative supervision and institutional supervision have their respective parts in improving the quality of education (Sari & Najah, 2018).

The school principal's supervision approach is used as a way of assessing the learning process of EC educators in class. Supervision requires techniques mandatory in order to improve the school quality. Several principles of educational supervision are scientific principles, democratic, cooperative, constructive and creative, collegial relationships, teacher-centered, and giving any feedback (Nuraini, 2018).

The collaborative academic supervision approach between school principals and educators is in line with research findings (Windarta, 2021), creating good relationships, involving two-way communication which is expected to provide solutions to learning problems faced by educators. As a supervisor, the principal is able to provide adequate, communicative relationships, establish discussions, and respect each other hence the assessment process becomes equitable.

Based on the interviews, the learning supervision method carried out by the school principal is a combination of individual discussions, observation, and documentation. The approach taken is informal, blended, and participatory so that educators can establish constructive and collegial relationships. Academic supervision is carried out periodically because the school began adopting the Merdeka Curriculum category 1, where the content of curriculum cover the essential material such as Project based character (Projek Penguatan Profile Pelajar Pancasila aka. P5). Thus, the principal should inform the academic supervision reported regularly to the provider in order to improve proficiency of EC educators.

As a role models, educators should have pedagogical, personality, social, and professional competencies. Besides, comprehension the curriculum, social emotions concept for young children, organizing methods and using media are required. The habituation of learning phase initiative educators to control, apply and organize educational tools and infrastructure in order to optimizing the achievements of children's growth and development.

Mastering ICT individually is voluntary amongst educators considering of technology literacy demands. This is in line with findings (Nessipbayeva, 2015, p. 151) that educators are required to have competence in managing classes, effective learning practices, effective assessment, and have qualified technological capabilities.

Based on the interview results, evidence was obtained that EC educators had increased their participation in online training due to flexible personal assignment which fit to curriculum, use of learning media and assessments issues. Curriculum Merdeka Implementation aka IKM require educator's compulsory their knowledge, perspective, teaching practice through access to the Merdeka Teaching Platform (PMM). The excerpt of interview:

“We are still allowing educators to access their respective of Merdeka Teaching Platforms (PMM). Through PMM there are various educational action examples of Merdeka Curriculum Implementation (IKM). ..... attended IKM training in the learning community to meet our understanding and implementing of IKM (site 2)

As a manager, the principal's allow the educator to develop their capability of new curriculum perspective, teaching, and using ICT. Besides giving them an opportunities to be involved and collaboration in educational community.

Thus, we observed that the principals have particular plan of actions confirm that the learning management in ECE running properly. The strategy cover EC empowerment by actively involving EC educators in the preparation, planning and formulating of the annual and semester performance program by identifying the vision, mission and goals of school associate to the IKM. It is expected that EC educators are capable to teaching at the right level which appropriate to their curiosity and aptitude. Empowerment EC strategy also considering about periodic supervision by collaborative, self-determine, and collegiate approach is able to guide educators, direct and open discussion of the educator's teaching process. Thus, it is used as a basis for improving the planning of the unit educator development program on an ongoing basis. Moreover, the principals provide EC educators to participate in online training voluntarily or through learning communities.

### **B. Facilities and Infrastructure Empowering the Action Plan**

Provider has enormous contribution to support educational facilities and infrastructure. Delivering these facilities for instance educational equipment, media, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and other infrastructure that accomodate conducive education along health prescription protocol. Management officer determine educational facilities from teacher then the proposal submitted to provider.

The strategy for empowering facilities and infrastructure during the Covid-19 pandemic was carried out in an effort to optimize learning process involving provider support in providing educational tools, utilization, and distribution facilities. The

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accessibility of management information systems is urgently needed in providing education services by instruments and infrastructure of technological.

Based on interviews with school principals and teachers, it was found that the provider supports proposals of ICT facilities and infrastructure by the management team. The provider's supporting educational facilities, learning materials, internet access, and subscribing to zoom meeting packages. EC educators using zoom for learning process and google classroom to conduct student assignment. The successful use of information system applications will work if other supporting facilities are available as learning tools such as the accessibility of electronic devices such as computers, laptops and cellphones (Rahayu & Haq, 2021).

The process of procuring learning facilities and infrastructure is based on suggestions from educators through the facilities and infrastructure division. In order for management to run effectively, the infrastructure division responsible to manage, utilization and distribution according to school procedures, activity content, and priority scheme.

Procurement of learning facilities and infrastructure based on suggestions from educators through the facilities and infrastructure division. The facilities and infrastructure sector submits proposals to the provider and budget planning is carried out based on a priority scale so that it is right on target. This is in accordance with Gunawan dan Benty (2017) in (Nasrudin & Maryadi, 2018), that the planning of educational facilities and infrastructure is used to support learning so that it runs effectively and on target.

The strategy for empowering facilities and infrastructure is pursued through effective planning, which means that management takes into account infrastructure planning, procurement of infrastructure, inventory of educational infrastructure, distribution, maintenance and elimination of educational infrastructure.

### C. Parents Empowering Strategy

The quality of EC services includes 4 service elements are quality learning processes, partnerships with parents, support for fulfilling essential early childhood services outside of the education, and leadership and resource management. The establishment of communication and collaboration means that education units are starting to establish partnerships with parents as one of the elements of quality early childhood services (Ministry of Education, 2022).

Parents are the main partners for schools in enhance early childhood development. Early childhood still needs attention and protection in order to achieve prosperity because they still rely on the help of adults such as parents, teachers and other adults. Especially learning during a pandemic, children's dependence has become very large in accessing online learning. Effective communication and collaboration are needed in identifying and preparing study materials at home. By establishing a partnership with parents, the learning process can run effectively.

The research findings indicate that there are parental and community personnel and community activities through WhatsApp Groups (WAG) in providing motivation and participation in various activities such as preparation of materials, coordination of daily activities, top theme activities, large activities involving other units, and reflection on child development. Through this forum, school principals and teachers can condition and monitor preparations and processes so that they can be used as further evaluations. Collaboration between educators and parents needs to be based on mutual trust. Murphy et.al argued (2021) through an online survey of parents and EC educators, data obtained that (1) parents experience in collaborating, (2) educators' trust in working with parents, (3) perceptions of educators regarding partnerships with parents need to be improved. Parents feel respected but need improvement in communication with educators. The majority of educators are confident in reporting children's learning progress but lack confidence in addressing families by name, responding to parental concerns or responding to the pressures of parenting. These findings indicate that there is a need for practical support and professional training in increasing the skills and confidence of educators in partnering with families.

Family engagement in learning in the form of feedback on reports of children development results during elementary school preparation (Rade, 2020), providing motivation, mentoring and harmony with education carried out by EC units, and consultation in dealing with parenting difficulties (Ministry of Education, 2022).

The research findings indicate that there is parental intervention and support in improving children's learning outcomes and opportunities for children to interact socially with peers and the school environment. The school environment provides a sense of comfort and fun (Silva & Elias, 2022) for inclusive children in particular, where educators adjust learning according to the needs of children in general.

The research findings found that teachers have the view that inclusive children must have the opportunity to learn, so that inclusive children are given the opportunity to learn according to their mental age learning achievements. The teacher intensively communicates with the therapist about the child's development. For this reason, educators need to be equipped with an understanding or mindset that teaching children is part of the profession, but teachers are still inadequate skills to organize it (Boylan, Barblett, & Knaus, 2018). Parent-teacher collaboration (Rade, 2020), is intensive in handling children with disability in grade B. This partnership is very important for the development and success of learning by children with disabilities (Dunlap & Fox, 2007; Keen, 2007; Summers et al., 2007).

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Further family support regarding information on early detection of child growth and development (DDTK). This partnership includes forms of essential services outside of ECE, this information has become an urgency during a pandemic where educators communicate with parents about children's development. This communication is not just a accustomed, but with this information, educators can monitor children's development in the form of children's height and weight on a standard evaluation. This partnership is a strategy for empowering parents by making parents a source of learning (Ministry of Education, 2022). Parents make this a reflection of whether their child has developed according to development and growth indicators, the extent of their development and the form of support provided by parents. Collaboration between parents and professional regarding strengths-based approach for children with special needs in charged of realistic environment lead advantageous experiences in school and community setting (Squires et.al (2013).

### D. Cross Site Findings

**Table 1. Cross-Site Research Findings**

EC Educator Empowerment Strategy	Site 1	Site 2	Conclusion
Involvement of EC Educators in Annual Performance Program	Educators are involved in the formulation and preparation of teaching programs and focus on Islamic based curriculum within the Merdeka Curriculum.	Educators are involved in program as a team of management and have a specific role. The principal designs Quality Assurance in order to guarantee the quality of learning.	Educator get involved to formulating annual program and curriculum based on Islamic values and Merdeka curriculum.
Academic Supervision of EC Educators	Academic supervision is held once per semester with informal techniques. Principals get involved to educational process simultaneuly.	Supervision is carried out intensively by the new Principal. The post-supervision approach is carried out with individual dialogue with educators regarding the strengths and weaknesses of educators.	Both sites implementing Merdeka covers strengthening of STEAM by P5. The supervision report is used as the basis for developing the competence of EC educators.
PAUD Educator Competency Improvement	Improving the competency educators through webinars, discussions with peers, learning community, and school principals, and access to PMM.	Discuss and collaborate with educators on methods and curriculum. Competency enhancement is carried out through independent webinars/youtube/PMM, and workshops.	Principals provide opportunities for educators to improve their competence by participating in training and participating in learning communities.
Facilities and infrastructure empowering strategy	Site 1	Site 2	Conclusion
Provider Support	Provide accessibility of a premium zoom meeting package, internet access and arrangement of classrooms according to prescription protocols. Support for learning facilities in the form of providing various educational equipment, maintenance and educational infrastructure.	Facility support by providing textbooks and educational equipment, subscribing to premium zoom meeting packages and wifi access at schools. In 2022, the new school principal proposed adding learning infrastructure with air conditioning in every classroom.	The Foundation's support is suggestions from the school management team so that the implementation of learning atmosphere in a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable.

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Utilization and distribution of facilities and infrastructure	The distribution pattern is adjusted to the need and urgency of using the infrastructure. There is a schedule for the utilization and distribution of sarpras.	The management team for facilities and infrastructure promote, utilization and distribution facilities with priority phase.	The distribution is based on the pattern of needs and urgency of activities.
Parents Empowerment Strategy	Site 1	Site 2	Conclusion
Parent Support	Parents' support is done through the WAG (Whats App Group) for coordinating internal activities, extracurricular activities, learning, and parenting activities. Coordination within the Jamiyyah forum for large-scale activities such as the annual anniversary of the provider.	Coordination through WAG for internal activities and theme peaks. Coordination through the Parent and Teacher Gathering Forum for school socialization activities in the new school year, joint activities of elementary and high school commemorating national holidays.	Coordination and collaboration have been carried out intensively regarding parenting, preparation of school children, extracurriculars. Coordination is done through the WAG.
Early Detection of Growth and Development	Educators coordinate and collaborate with parents regarding early development screening. This information for children with special needs is coordinated between therapists, parents and teachers.	Collaboration between educators and parents is well established. The data needed is in the form of weight dan height of children. Student with disability have individual asement by therapist.	Using developmental monitor based on developmental indicator screening and informed to the health care provider.

### CONCLUSION

This research adds to the understanding of the strategies carried out by all elements of the school in improving the quality of learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. The findings of this study indicate that communication and collaboration between school principals and educators is effective in increasing educator competence in providing quality and optimal learning process. We found that teacher competency rose during pandemic since teachers got involved to identifying adapted, and implemented Merdeka Curriculum. Implementing new curriculum during pandemic was demanding regarding joint action of collaboration principals and teachers to plan action, prepare learning process, and ICT proficiency.

We also found that collaboration between educators and family has increased as indicated by parental support in preparation for learning and providing information of early developmental screening especially for children with special needs.

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