

**Parental Perceptions of Inclusive Education in Almaty, Kazakhstan: Parents of  
Typically Developing Children**

Delima Beisembayeva

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in

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53 Kabanbay Batyr Ave.  
Nur-Sultan 010000  
Republic of Kazakhstan  
Date: 22 of October, 2022

Dear Delima Beisembayeva,

This letter now confirms that your research project titled...

Parental Attitudes toward Inclusive Education in Kazakhstan

(a) has been approved by the Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee of Nazarbayev University.

You may proceed with contacting your preferred research site and commencing your participant recruitment strategy.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Janet Helmer

**On behalf of:**

Dr Matthew Courtney, *PhD*  
Chair, GSE Ethics Committee

Graduate School of Education  
Nazarbayev University

Block C3, Room M027

Office: +7 (7172) 70 6659

Mobile: +7 708 274 9564

email: [matthew.courtney@nu.edu.kz](mailto:matthew.courtney@nu.edu.kz), [gse.irec@nu.edu.kz](mailto:gse.irec@nu.edu.kz)

## CITI Training Certificate



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**Delima Beisembayeva**

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## **Abstract**

### **Parental Attitudes toward Inclusive Education in Almaty, Kazakhstan: parents of typically developing children**

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was a starting point toward developing the idea of inclusion in all aspects of society worldwide (United Nations, 2006). Education for students with special needs is currently an important topic of discussion in terms of Kazakhstani educational delivery; awareness of inclusive practices is evolving (Ministry of Education, 2019). Considering that inclusive education is a relatively new concept in Kazakhstan, there is limited research on the topic of parental perceptions. Understanding parents' perspectives on inclusive practices, as they are one of the main stakeholders, is crucial because parents greatly influence how inclusive education initiatives are implemented and succeed. The purpose of the current study is to investigate the attitudes and beliefs of parents of typically developing children toward inclusive education. The study used a qualitative research approach, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight parents of typically developing children in elementary schools in Almaty city in Kazakhstan. According to the research findings, most participating parents felt they needed to be more knowledgeable about school policy practices related to inclusive education. Based on the participant's previous knowledge of inclusive education and the interviewer's further explanation of the term, findings revealed that most parents had positive or neutral opinions of inclusive education and thought it benefited both typically developing children and children with disabilities. Nevertheless, parents-participants identified several barriers to its successful implementation including a lack of appropriate conditions and resources, bullying, overcrowded classes, and teacher unpreparedness. Overall, the study provided insight into Kazakhstani parents' attitudes toward inclusive education and emphasized the necessity for

ongoing initiatives to advance understanding about inclusive education and parental concerns.



## Аңдатпа

### Қазақстан, Алматыдағы Инклюзивті Білім Беруді Ата-Аналардың Қабылдауы: Қалыпты Дамып Келе Жатқан Балалардың Ата-Аналары

Мүгедектердің құқықтары туралы БҰҰ Конвенциясы инклюзивтілікті ғаламдық қоғамның барлық аспектілеріне қосу идеясын дамытудың бастапқы нүктесі болды (Біріккен Ұлттар Ұйымы, 2006). Ерекше қажеттіліктері бар студенттерге білім беру Қазақстан білім беру жүйесіндегі өзекті тақырып болып табылады және қазіргі кезде инклюзивтілік туралы хабардарлық артып келеді (Білім министрлігі, 2019 ж.).

Қазақстандағы инклюзивті білім беру салыстырмалы түрде жаңа ұғым болғандықтан, ата-аналардың білім берудің бұл түріне деген көзқарасы тақырыбына арналған зерттеулердің саны шектеулі. Ата-аналардың инклюзивті көзқарастарын түсіну өте маңызды, себебі олар негізгі мүдделі тараптардың бірі болғандықтан, инклюзивті білім беру бастамаларының жүзеге асырылуы мен табысқа жетуіне үлкен әсер етеді. Зерттеудің мақсаты қалыпты дамып келе жатқан балалардың ата-аналарының инклюзивті білім беруге деген көзқарасы мен сенімін зерттеу болып табылады. Бұл дипломдық жұмыста сапалы зерттеу әдісі қолданылды және Қазақстандағы Алматы қаласының бастауыш мектептеріндегі қалыпты дамып келе жатқан балалардың сегіз ата-анасымен жартылай құрылымдық сұхбат жүргізілді. Зерттеу нәтижелеріне сәйкес, қатысқан ата-аналардың көпшілігі инклюзивті білім беруге қатысты мектеп саясатының әдістері туралы көбірек білу керек деп есептейді. Қатысушылардың инклюзивті білім беру туралы бұрынғы білгендеріне және интервьюердің бұл терминді одан әрі түсіндіруіне сүйене отырып, нәтижелер ата-аналардың көпшілігінің инклюзивті білім беруге оң немесе бейтарап көзқараста екенін және оның әдетте дамып келе жатқан балаларға да, мүмкіндігі шектеулі балаларға да пайдасы бар деп есептейтінін көрсетті. Дегенмен, қатысушы ата-аналар оны сәтті жүзеге асырудың

бірнеше кедергілерін анықтады, соның ішінде тиісті құралдар мен ресурстардың жоқтығы, ерекше қажеттіліктері бар балаларды қорлау, сыныпта тым көп оқушының болуы және мұғалімдердің арнайы дайындықтан өтпеуі. Жалпы алғанда, зерттеу қазақстандық ата-аналардың инклюзивті білімге деген көзқарасын түсінуге мүмкіндік берді және инклюзивті білім беруді түсінуді және ықтимал қиындықтарды жақсарту бойынша тұрақты бастамалардың қажеттілігін атап өтті.

**Аннотация**  
**Восприятие Инклюзивного Образования Родителями в Казахстане,**  
**Алматы: Родители Типично Развивающихся Детей**

Конвенция ООН о правах людей с инвалидностью, стала отправной точкой для развития идеи включения их во все аспекты жизни общества во всем мире (United Nations, 2006). Образование для учащихся с особыми потребностями в настоящее время является важной темой для обсуждения в Казахстане, осведомленность об инклюзии растет (Министерство образования, 2019 г.). Учитывая, что инклюзивное образование является относительно новой концепцией в Казахстане, количество исследований по теме родительских взглядов по отношению к данному типу образования ограничено. Понимание взглядов родителей на инклюзию, поскольку они являются одними из основных заинтересованных сторон, имеет решающее значение, поскольку родители в значительной степени влияют на то, как реализуются и добиваются успеха инициативы в области инклюзивного образования. Целью настоящего исследования является изучение отношения и убеждений родителей типично развивающихся детей к инклюзивному образованию. В данной диссертации использовался метод качественного исследования, и были проведены полуструктурированные интервью с восемью родителями типично развивающихся детей в начальных школах Казахстана, город Алматы. Согласно результатам исследования, большинство участвующих родителей считали, что им необходимо иметь больше знаний о методах школьной политики, связанных с инклюзивным образованием. Основываясь на предыдущих знаниях участников об инклюзивном образовании и дальнейшем объяснении этого термина интервьюером, результаты показали, что большинство родителей положительно или нейтрально относятся к инклюзивному образованию и считают, что оно приносит пользу как типично развивающимся детям,

так и детям с ограниченными возможностями. Тем не менее, родители-участники выявили несколько препятствий на пути к его успешной реализации, включая отсутствие соответствующих условий и ресурсов, травлю, переполненные классы и неподготовленность учителей. В целом, исследование дало представление об отношении казахстанских родителей к инклюзивному образованию и подчеркнуло необходимость постоянных инициатив для улучшения понимания инклюзивного образования и потенциальных проблем.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background Information

Inclusive education is an approach to education that aims to provide all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, with equal opportunities to learn and participate in the classroom. UNESCO defines inclusive education as “a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners” (2009). Like many other countries, Kazakhstan has developed inclusive education policies to enhance the opportunities and educational outcomes for students with disabilities. However, if education systems need to be strengthened for the ongoing success of all students, schools and inclusion programs need to engage those inside and outside the school who understand the mission and vision, and who have a personal stake in the performance of the program. The success of inclusive education depends on several factors, including the attitudes and perceptions of parents of typically developing children towards this approach.

It is well-known that parents play a critical role in their child's education, and their support and involvement can be a critical factor in the success of inclusive education initiatives (Vlachou et al., 2016). Hence, it is essential to understand the attitudes of parents as stakeholders in education towards inclusive education, as they can be highly motivated and can help drive, achieve, and sustain positive change.

Although research on parents' opinions on inclusive education have been done in Kazakhstan, most of them have concentrated on the viewpoints of parents of children with disabilities. The opinions of parents of generally developing children, who are equally important participants in the inclusive education process, are little studied. By learning parental perceptions of inclusive education, policymakers and educators may create efficient

measures to promote and sustain inclusive education in Kazakhstan, which can help both students with disabilities and children who are typically developing.

### ***1.1.1. History of Inclusive Education***

The history of inclusive education is lengthy and complicated, spanning numerous nations and eras. The concept of inclusive education can be traced back to the mid-20th century when disability rights advocates began calling for the integration of children with disabilities into mainstream schools. In the United States, the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case in 1954 set the stage for the desegregation of schools and helped to pave the way for the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream education (Booth & Ainscow, 2016).

The landmark Education for All Handicapped Children Act, also known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), was passed in the United States in 1975. Its goal was to guarantee that educational institutions would give students with disabilities a high-quality education. In the 1970s and 1980s, inclusive education gained momentum in many countries, with a growing emphasis on providing individualized support to students with disabilities in mainstream schools. The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities further reinforced the importance of inclusive education as a human right (Osgood & Hinshaw, 2017).

In the 1990s, the concept of inclusive education expanded beyond the education of students with disabilities to encompass a broader vision of diversity and inclusion in the classroom. The Salamanca Statement, issued by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, emphasized the need for schools to accommodate the diversity of

all learners, including those with disabilities, and to provide inclusive educational opportunities for all (UNESCO, 1994).

With many nations implementing inclusive education frameworks and practices in their schools, inclusive education has become a significant focus of educational policy worldwide (Palmer, 2001). Since then, the concept of inclusive education has developed further as the advantages of inclusive practices for all students—regardless of their skills or differences—have come to be better understood. Today, inclusive education aims to create learning environments that support the diverse needs of all learners and promote equity, social justice, and full participation in society for all individuals (Ainscow, 2002).

### ***1.1.2. Inclusive Education in Kazakhstan***

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was a starting point toward developing the idea of inclusion in all aspects of society the world over (United Nations, 2006). In Kazakhstan, inclusive education is continuing to evolve as more people are becoming aware of inclusive practices. The global trend of progress in education has had its influence in Kazakhstan, resulting in government policies emphasizing education's importance as the key to a better, civilized society (Ministry of Education, 2019). In the past, it was unrealistic and impracticable for children with disabilities to learn alongside regular children in mainstream schools (Pijl et al., 2010). Subsequently, the government of Kazakhstan introduced a set of measures for the inclusion of children with disabilities in these mainstream schools. In 2015-2016, at the Convention On The Rights Of Persons With Disabilities (CRPD) and UNESCO Conventions, Kazakhstan ratified international human rights treaties that aim to give rights to people with disabilities, which includes the rights of children with special needs to have access to good-quality education (Rittmann, 2019). Thus, educating students with SEN has been a significantly important subject of discussion, particularly since the release of the State Program for Development of Education and Science

of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2020-2025, which is a program designed to make education progress visible (Ministry of Education, 2019). Apart from the goal of providing quality education that is competitive globally, the State Program focuses on integrating inclusive practices, and aimed to ensure that by the year 2019, thirty percent of preschools, seventy percent of mainstream schools, and forty percent of technical schools would be fully inclusive for students with any type of disability or special educational needs. A step towards inclusion is a step towards acceptance and progress for Kazakhstan.

The problem is that a large part of the Kazakhstani population is still unaware of the benefits of inclusive education, including parents of both regular children and children with disabilities (Khamidulina, 2018). According to the Ministry of Healthcare, about seven hundred and five thousand people (705,000) have special needs in Kazakhstan (Shayakhmetova, 2021). Zholtayeva et al. (2013) states that while many stakeholders (schools and government) may be on the path towards inclusive education, parents play a key role in the success of all educational initiatives. Thus, it is crucial to understand the views of parents as parental awareness of the policies is a significant factor in inclusion's successful implementation. This study explores the attitudes and perceptions of parents on inclusive practices as positive attitudes seem to be a vital issue for the success of inclusion (Florian & Spratt 2013).

### ***1.1.3. Parents as One of the Main Stakeholders***

The participation and collaboration of a wide range of stakeholders are necessary to implement inclusive education effectively. Parents and families, students, teachers, school administration, and educational authorities are the main stakeholders.

This study will focus on parents as their attitudes about inclusion can significantly impact how well inclusive policies are implemented in schools. According to a study by

Stevens and Wurf (2020), parents who support inclusive policies and practices in schools are more likely to have a good attitude toward inclusion. According to the study, parents with anti-inclusion views may make it more challenging to implement inclusive policies and practices. According to a study by Boer et al. (2010), parents of students with disabilities who participate in inclusive education found that their children had better academic results, more vital social skills, and higher self-esteem. The study also emphasizes the need for parental input in developing inclusive school policies and procedures sensitive to all students' needs. Parents feel obligated to stand up for their children with special needs or impairments. (Togbenu et al., 2021) and should be allowed to participate in decision-making processes and be taught about inclusive education policies and practices.

## **1.2. Parental views on Inclusion**

An analysis of studies shows different findings on parents' perceptions of inclusive education. The study of Vlachou et al. (2016) has revealed that the views on inclusive practices of 40 Greek parents were primarily positive or neutral. However, the study also revealed that most parents had not heard anything about inclusive education or how it is executed. It was discovered that more than half of the participants were never informed by teachers about inclusive education and inclusivity. The study proposes informing all parents about inclusive education, making its implementation easier.

Paseka and Shwab (2020) examined German parents' attitudes toward inclusive education, specifically their perceptions of inclusive teaching practices and resources. It was found that parents' attitudes towards including SEN children differed, depending on a disability type: physical disability, learning disability, behavioral disorder, and mental disability. Attitudes were primarily positive towards physical and learning disabilities, while attitudes toward behavioral and mental disabilities were mostly neutral. Additionally, it was revealed

that parents whose children already attend inclusive classes have a more positive view of implementing inclusive education.

The results of a qualitative study by Khamidulina (2018) have shown that parents in Kazakhstan are primarily positive about inclusive education. They are optimistic about welcoming students with disabilities into mainstream schools and are aware of the possible benefits of inclusion. However, they admit that much work still needs to be done and suggest that there is a long road ahead for Kazakhstani society until it reaches full inclusion.

### **1.3. Statement of the Purpose**

Although the government of Kazakhstan has attempted to support inclusive education, adopting inclusive practices in classrooms has been slow and uneven (Rollan & Somerton, 2021). One possible barrier to implementing inclusive education is parents' attitudes toward including students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. It is unknown how parental attitudes may be affecting the adoption of inclusive practices in schools because there needs to be more research on parental attitudes regarding inclusive education in Kazakhstan. Therefore, this study will investigate the parental understanding of inclusive education in Kazakhstan and its potential impact on implementing inclusive practices in schools.

### **1.4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the parents' of typically developing children who are primary school students views on inclusive education. The study aims to provide insights into Kazakhstani parents' attitudes and beliefs toward inclusive education.

### **1.5. Research Questions**

The main research question is: What are the perceptions of parents of typically developing children on inclusive education?

Sub-questions:

What do parents see as the challenges for schools when they try to implement inclusive education policies?

What effect do parents believe inclusion has on a non-disabled child?

### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

This study on the views of parents of typically developing children is significant for several reasons. The study provides an understanding of parental attitudes about inclusive education and what is influencing them. This information can be used to develop strategies to address any concerns or barriers to inclusive education and to increase parental support and involvement in inclusive education programs.

The effectiveness of inclusive education efforts can be greatly influenced by the support and participation of parents, who play a crucial role in their children's education. Educators and policymakers can develop more effective strategies for implementing inclusive education and engaging parents by understanding parents' attitudes toward inclusive education.

In order to promote inclusive education, the study can stimulate cooperation between parents and educators. In turn, educators can inform parents about the benefits of inclusive education and how they can support their child's participation in inclusive classrooms.

Inclusive education helps advance social inclusion and lessen the stigmatization of students with disabilities or other differences. The study can aid in fostering more acceptance and understanding of diversity in the classroom and society by raising parental support for inclusive education.



Overall, this study can promote more effective inclusive education implementation, improved parent-teacher communication, and increased societal inclusion and acceptance of diversity.

### **1.7. Key terms**

*Inclusion* is "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education" (UNESCO, 2019, p. 3).

*Inclusive education* is "a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners, regardless of their abilities, disabilities, or socio-economic status. It involves transforming the education system to ensure that all learners are welcomed into the classroom and are supported to learn and develop to their full potential" (UNESCO, 2009).

*Students with SEN (Special Educational Needs)* is "students with a restriction in the capacity to learn, resulting from a physical, sensory, intellectual, or emotional impairment, or a combination of these" (UNESCO, 2009, p. 13).

*Children with disabilities* "are children who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that, when combined with other obstacles, may prevent them from fully and equally participating in society" (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2007).

*Typically developing children* is "the expected sequence of physical, cognitive, and psychosocial milestones that children achieve as they grow from birth through adolescence" (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2019).

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Introduction**

In recent decades, inclusion in education has drawn much attention. According to UNESCO (2009), giving all students a chance to engage in the same learning environment, regardless of their skills, is the practice of inclusion. The success of inclusive education is greatly influenced by parental views on inclusion (Vlachou et al., 2016). This literature review looks at studies on parents' perceptions of inclusive education and describes the theoretical framework used as a lens to guide the study.

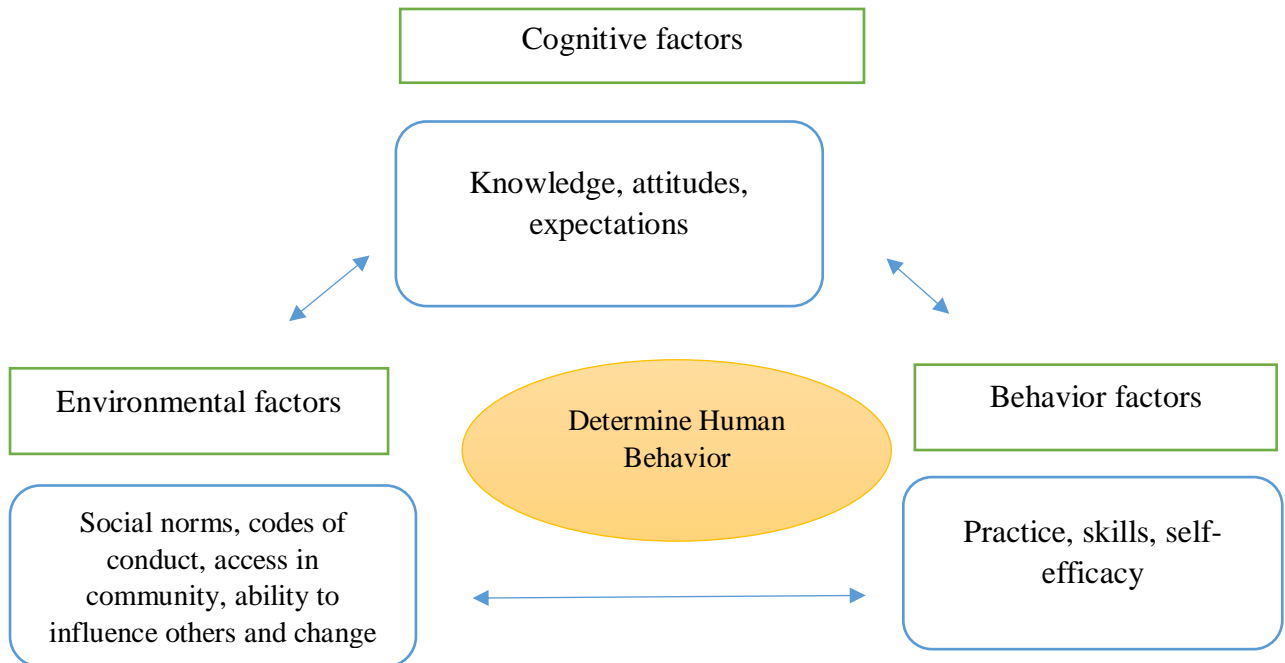
### **2.2. Theoretical Framework**

Social cognitive theory is a psychological theory that emphasizes the importance of learning through observation, modeling, and self-reflection (Bandura, 2001). Bandura's social cognitive theory has greatly influenced how behavior can be understood and analyzed in various contexts, including psychology, education, communication, and health. In the context of inclusive education, Bandura's theory suggests that parents' attitudes toward inclusive education may significantly impact their children's attitudes and behaviors. If parents hold positive attitudes toward inclusive education, their children are more likely to view inclusive education positively and exhibit behaviors that support inclusion. On the other hand, children may be more likely to see inclusion negatively and display unsupportive behavior if parents have negative attitudes regarding inclusive education.

The social cognitive theory is presented in Figure 1. The figure presents the view of human behavior through cognitive, environmental, and behavioral factors. In other words, the theory details that both external and internal factors influence parents' views, beliefs, and behavior.

**Figure 1**

*Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. Based on Bandura (2001)*



It is essential for educators and policymakers to work with parents to promote positive attitudes toward inclusive education (Salend, 2008). This can be achieved through parent education programs, outreach efforts, and ongoing communication between parents and schools. By working together to promote positive attitudes toward inclusive education, parents, and educators can help to create a more supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students.

In a study by Froiland et al. (2013), Bandura's social cognitive theory was used to understand the factors that influence parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities. The study found that parents who felt confident in their ability to advocate for their children were more likely to be involved in their education.

Parents can benefit from self-reflection, as social cognitive theory proposes that individuals can learn and grow by reflecting on their own experiences and also the experiences of others. This means that parents can develop a deeper understanding of

inclusive education by reflecting on their own beliefs and attitudes of others who support inclusive education.

### **2.3. Definition of Inclusive Education**

In the literature, inclusive education has been defined in several different ways. Inclusive education can be described as "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education" (UNESCO, 2009, p. 9). In other words, teaching all children in the same classroom, regardless of their talents or limitations, is known as inclusive education. This definition highlights the significance of attending to all learners' various needs to promote inclusion.

Another definition of inclusive education, provided by Booth and Ainscow (2002), emphasizes the importance of addressing systemic barriers to inclusion. They define inclusive education as a process of increasing the participation of all students in mainstream settings, reducing exclusion from schools, and addressing the diversity of needs of all learners by changing and adapting the content, approaches, structures, and strategies of learning and teaching. In order to attain inclusion, this concept highlights the necessity of structural reform in education.

Similar definitions of inclusive education are provided by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), who define inclusive education as a way of thinking founded on the belief that every student has a right to enroll in a school that embraces diversity and strives to eradicate all types of prejudice. In order to foster inclusion, this concept highlights the significance of developing a supportive and inclusive school culture.

Lastly, according to Ainscow and Miles (2008), inclusive education is a method of getting more kids involved and decreasing their exclusion from local schools' communities,

cultures, and curricula. This definition emphasizes the necessity of overcoming physical and academic barriers and social and cultural components of inclusion.

In conclusion, while there are many different definitions of inclusive education, they all share the same core components, such as addressing the various needs of every learner, advancing equity and social justice, and implementing structural changes in the educational system to accomplish inclusion. It might be helpful for educators and policymakers to build adequate ways to foster inclusion in their respective situations by understanding the numerous definitions of inclusive education.

## **2.4. Parental Views on Inclusion: Worldwide and Kazakhstan**

### **2.4.1. Worldwide**

Research has been done across the world to determine how parents view inclusion. In general, parents were primarily positive toward inclusive education. For example, in a study conducted in Thailand by Sharma (2019), parents had positive attitudes toward inclusion. They believed it benefited both students with disabilities and non-disabled students. Parents of typically developed children considered the social development of children as the main benefit of inclusive education. However, they had concerns about the preparedness of teachers and the quality of teacher training. Parents of children with SEN are positive about inclusion, primarily because of social acceptance and possible improvement of academic skills that can take place in the inclusive classroom (Sharma, 2019).

The study conducted in Greece by Vlachou et al. (2016) showed that most of the surveyed parents had positive or neutral attitudes toward the inclusion if the children with SEN had all the necessary support and could learn and socialize in the school. The Greece study by Dimitrios et al. (2008) revealed that parental attitudes toward inclusion were mainly positive. However, the analysis showed that children's age appeared to be an essential factor

that influenced positive or negative attitudes of parents toward inclusion. Results of the surveys indicated that parents of children under 18 were more favorable toward inclusive practices. The USA study of Leyser and Kirke (2004) showed similar results. They reported that the positive perceptions of inclusion were expressed by parents of younger students, parents with a college education, and parents with a child with a mild disability. They believed that inclusive education promoted social and academic growth for students with disabilities.

A study conducted in Germany by Paseka and Schwab (2020) revealed that parents' attitudes varied depending on the type of disability. Parents were positive toward students with a physical or learning disability and neutral toward behavioral or mental disabilities. Similarly, the study by Hilbert (2014) in the US revealed that overall, parents of typically developing children and parents of children with disabilities have a positive outlook on inclusion.

However, other studies have found that parents have negative attitudes toward inclusion. For example, a study conducted in the United Kingdom by Lindsay and Edwards (2013) found that parents had concerns about their children's academic outcomes in inclusive classrooms. They also had concerns about the safety of their children in inclusive classrooms. Additionally, Shogren and Wehmeys (2015) study found that some parents were worried about how their children with disabilities would do in inclusive settings on academic and social fronts. Many parents believed their kids might struggle with the curriculum, connect poorly with typically developing students, and miss out on specialized services offered in separate special education classrooms.

Some studies have found that parental attitudes towards inclusion may be influenced by factors such as their child's disability, their own level of education and income, and cultural

and religious beliefs. For example, a study by Abu-Hamour and Muhaidat (2020) and Smith (2022) found that parental attitudes toward inclusion were influenced by factors such as the severity of their child's disability, their level of education, and their religious beliefs.

While studies show that many parents have positive attitudes toward inclusive education, some have negative attitudes that can hinder the success of inclusive education. According to research, some parents of typically developing children may have unfavorable attitudes about inclusive education. Many things, including a lack of knowledge of the idea of inclusion, a fear of the unknown, worries about their child's academic development, and the conviction that their child's needs might not be satisfied in an inclusive classroom, might contribute to these unfavorable attitudes (Sharma, 2019; Hilbert, 2014). According to Vlachou's (2016) study, parents of typically developing children who held negative attitudes shared their worries regarding the quality of instruction in inclusive environments and the requirement for adequate support for teachers. The study also emphasized the significance of involving parents in decisions surrounding their children's education and the necessity of increased cooperation between schools and families to foster inclusive practices.

Overall, it's crucial to realize that parents of typically developing children frequently have unfavorable views regarding inclusion, but that these attitudes can be changed with assistance and education. It's critical to keep highlighting the advantages of inclusive education and to give parents the knowledge and tools they require to comprehend and support the idea of inclusion.

#### **2.4.2. *Kazakhstan***

Inclusion is a critical issue in the education of children with disabilities in Kazakhstan. Like many other nations, Kazakhstan has attempted to embrace inclusive education policies, and numerous studies have been done to evaluate how well they have

been implemented. However, the views of parents on inclusion have been largely overlooked, yet they play a crucial role in shaping education policy and practice. There needs to be more research on parents and inclusive education in Kazakhstan. This chapter section will review the existing research in Kazakhstan on a topic.

Khamidulina's (2018) study has shown that Kazakhstani parents have mostly positive attitudes about inclusion. The study found that parents faced various challenges, such as a lack of information and communication with teachers, negative attitudes toward disability, and inadequate support services. They suggested that Kazakhstan needs to prepare to transition into an inclusive society. The study recommended that the government prioritize involving parents in decision-making processes and provide necessary support services to families.

Kussainova (2020) researched the views of parents of children with Down syndrome on inclusive education. According to the study, parents' attitudes about inclusive education were mixed. Several parents expressed worries about the stigma attached to their children's disabilities and the possible harm they could do to their child's academic progress. On the other hand, several parents showed support for inclusive education and thought it might give their kids better prospects.

The results of the study by Alzhanova (2021) on the attitudes of parents and teachers towards inclusive education in Kazakhstan support the evidence that Kazakhstani parents primarily have positive attitudes toward inclusive education. The study found that parents had positive attitudes towards inclusive education but also expressed concerns about the quality of education their children would receive in inclusive classrooms. To ensure that their children's needs were met, parents also highlighted the need for increased teacher support and training. According to the study, parents confront various difficulties, including inadequate support services, a lack of knowledge and communication with teachers, and negative



attitudes toward disabilities. According to the report, the government should prioritize including parents in decision-making processes and provide families with essential support services.

## **2.5. Parental Concerns about Inclusive Education**

Due to a variety of factors, including a lack of understanding of the inclusion concept, worries about their child's academic and social development, a fear of the unknown, and the conviction that their child's needs might not be met in an inclusive classroom, parents may be concerned about inclusive education (Vlachou, 2016; Leyser & Kirke, 2004). The purpose of this section of the chapter is to discuss parental worries about inclusive education.

Parents of children with disabilities expressed their concerns that their children will be met with rejection, isolation, and bullying if they attend an inclusive school (Leyser & Kirk, 2004). The study of Dimitrios et al. (2008) revealed that parents' main concern is whether their disabled children will be accepted by their peers without disabilities. Wong et al. (2015) revealed that other concerns include the preparedness of mainstream schools to welcome children with SEN. They are still determining if mainstream schools can meet their children's needs and provide a high-quality education. Staples and Diliberto (2010) found that parents described their interactions with schools as disappointing and unhelpful. The main concerns about mainstream schools are teaching abilities and classroom sizes. The results of the study by Sharma (2019) have revealed that parents are very concerned about high-quality teacher training and the need for qualified school professionals to implement inclusion.

According to previous studies, parents are concerned about the instructors' qualifications and subject matter knowledge in inclusive classes, especially if they have little to no prior experience teaching children with disabilities. According to Peck et al. (2004), parents of typically developing children have two main concerns about inclusion: 1) teachers

will be more attentive toward children with disabilities rather than others, and 2) children with disabilities will behave in a manner that will distract learning.

Parents may be concerned that inclusive education may lower academic standards since teachers must accommodate various learning preferences and skills. In her study, Rogers (2007) discovered that the primary concern of parents in the UK is a conflict of interest. While there is a big aspiration to implement inclusive schooling, there is also a priority to have strong academic performance and high achievement. The problem is having a focus on testing rather than freedom of creativity. In the study by Stevens (2020), parents of typically developing children expressed concerns about teachers' knowledge and professional traits. They were not sure that the classroom setting was ready to welcome children with disabilities the same way as regular children. Also, the study showed that parents heard about inclusion but needed to learn how it can be applied in practice. According to Vlachou (2016), half of the respondents – parents of typically developing children- did not know what inclusion is or did not fully understand the term.

Parents of typically developing children in the study by Sharma (2019) expressed some concerns. Ninety percent of participants were worried about teaching practices and the quality of teaching staff. Parents of children with disabilities feared their children would be isolated, excluded, and laughed at. Thirty-three percent of parents were concerned about a possible lack of discipline in an inclusive setting and the possibility that their child would be scared by the behavior of students with disabilities (Sharma, 2019). The results of a study by Elkins et al. (2003) indicate similar worries in their studies, where parents believed that students would be less productive and more fearful in the inclusive classroom.

Students with disabilities may exhibit behavior that is disruptive to the learning environment. Vlachou's (2016) study showed that parents of typically developing children were concerned about the safety of the classroom environment when there are children with

behavioral problems in the class. In the study by Paseka and Schwab (2020), the results of interviews revealed that attitudes varied depending on the type of disability. Attitudes toward physical disabilities were more positive. Parents were concerned when their child attended a classroom with children with behavioral or mental problems.

## **2.6. Factors that May Influence Parental Views**

A variety of factors influence parents' opinions on inclusive education. While some parents support inclusive education, others may have negative opinions that could prevent its implementation or reduce its effectiveness. This section looks at studies on the factors that may affect parents' perceptions of inclusive education. De Boer et al. (2016) proposed that parents' attitudes and behavior influence the attitudes and behavior of their children. Parents who did not support inclusive education were seen to have a negative influence over their child's attitudes and behavior. According to Stoiber et al. (1998), parental perceptions of inclusive education may be influenced by several issues. These issues are presented below.

Parents' attitudes regarding inclusive education are significantly influenced by their beliefs and values. While some parents might think that children with disabilities should receive an education apart from their peers, others could think that all children should receive an education in inclusive classrooms (De Boer et al., 2016).

Parental opinions may be influenced by their own prior experiences with inclusive education (Vlachou, 2016). Parents are more inclined to support inclusive education if they have had positive experiences with it than if they have had negative ones. Societal and cultural issues can also influence parental attitudes toward inclusive education. Different cultures may have different perspectives on disability, affecting how parents feel about inclusive education (Sharma, 2019).

Positive attitudes about inclusive education may be more prevalent among parents actively involved in their children's education (Palmer et al., 2001). Parents who participate in the educational process can directly observe the advantages of inclusive education and their child's development.

## **2.7. Inclusion and Typically Developing Children**

While there is no doubt that inclusive education has a significant impact on students with disabilities, non-disabled children are impacted by it as well. Several studies showed the effect inclusive education has on typically developing children. The analysis of the results of the study by Sharma (2019) shows that 80% of parents believe that their typically developing child would become more empathetic, open-minded, and sensitive if they studied in an inclusive classroom. Ninety percent of parents think inclusion has social benefits for children with SEN. Other results indicate that 50% of the parents whose non-disabled children already attend inclusive schools report their children have become more patient, supportive, and helpful. According to the study, parents agree that an inclusive classroom helps their children to become aware of individual differences.

The main advantages of inclusion that parents pointed out were learning to be kind and compassionate. On the other hand, parents considered the possibility of children with SEN being distracting as a disadvantage of inclusion. They think that students with disabilities will slow the learning process for their typically developing children. According to Rafferty and Griffin (2005), parents expressed their fears that their non-disabled children will be afraid of the behavior of children with SEN and unable to study productively in such an environment. The study of Palmer et al. (2002) showed similar results that concluded that parents believe that in an inclusive classroom, children with SEN may behave disruptively and be harmful.

The study of Vlachou et al. (2016) examined the opinions of parents on the effects of inclusive education on their typically developing children. According to this study, most participants believe the effects are positive. They said that there are social benefits in an inclusive classroom; some parents spoke on inclusion's academic and social advantages for typically developing children.

## **2.8. Summary**

This chapter summarizes several studies that have examined the view of parents on inclusive education in Kazakhstan and worldwide. Overall, the literature review showed that parents generally have positive attitudes toward inclusive education. However, they also express concerns about the quality of education that their children will receive in inclusive classrooms. Many parents believe that more teacher training and support are needed to meet all children's needs.

Parental involvement is crucial to the success of inclusive education, and efforts should be made to involve parents in decision-making processes and provide them with the necessary support and resources. Overall, the studies emphasize the importance of understanding parental views on inclusion, and to enable the successful implementation of inclusive education policy, the problems they face must be addressed.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology that was used to study the views of parents of typically developing children on inclusive education in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The methods chapter outlines the procedures and techniques used to collect and analyze data. This chapter contains the following nine sections: Introduction, Research Design and Rationale, Research Site, Sample and Sampling Procedures, Data Collection Instruments, Data Collection Procedures, Data Analysis Methods, Ethical Concerns, and Summary.

#### **3.2. Research Design and Rationale**

The study's research used a qualitative design because it was found the most appropriate for this study as the researcher aimed to explore processes and phenomena that are challenging to measure, like beliefs, attitudes, and experiences. The qualitative method is advantageous as researchers can collect rich data with examples and descriptions. This method helps the researcher fully emerge into participants' experience (Leavy, 2017). The qualitative research design helped the researcher to understand how people sense their lives and experiences. The approach is Phenomenology. This method focuses on investigating people's subjective experiences and learning how they interpret and make sense of the world. It aims to explore a problem and develops an understanding of the central phenomena (Creswell, 2007). This type of research design was considered the most suitable for this study because it helped gain insight from the interviews, enabling to understand parental views on inclusion. Using semi-structured interviews, data were collected on participants' views on inclusive education in Kazakhstan.

### **3.3. Research Site**

A research site is a location where a study is conducted, and data is collected for research purposes (Mertens, 2015). In this study, there was no specific research site. The participants were chosen through purposeful sampling. The interviews were conducted in places that were arranged for the convenience of the respondents where they were comfortable, and the place was private enough to conduct the interview without being heard by others.

### **3.4. Sample and Sampling Procedures**

The participants of the study were eight parents of typically developing children. Three participants were males, five were females, and they were chosen through purposeful sampling. The participants and research site were chosen intentionally (Creswell, 2012). According to Cohen et al. (2011), sampling is choosing the participants to represent a generalized population in the research study. Purposeful sampling means that the researcher intentionally chooses study participants to understand the central phenomena (Creswell, 2012). The basis of purposeful sampling is to seek out the best applicable cases to produce the best data (Patton, 2015). Purposeful sampling will help this study gain insights into different people who were carefully selected by the researcher.

The researcher shared the information on the research with colleagues and friends through social media. Posts were written on the social media accounts where there was stated that for the research, parents of typically- developing children aged 6-10 who are primary school students were needed. A letter to the parents was sent describing the research so they could make an informed decision about participating.

### **3.5. Data Collection Instruments**

Based on the study's qualitative approach, semi-structured interviews were considered the most appropriate type of data collection instrument. A qualitative interview collects data when researchers ask general, open-ended questions and then records them (Creswell, 2012).

One-on-one interviews were conducted to collect the information. Open-ended questions were used as the most helpful way to understand the participants' beliefs, attitudes, and ideas. A semi-structured interview is a type of interview where questions are used flexibly; the interview does not have a predetermined structure (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). This method was chosen because it is considered the most appropriate way to explore participants' attitudes, beliefs, and opinions. The questions of the interview were explicitly created for this study. Consent forms were signed by the participants prior to doing the interviews.

### **3.6. Data Collection Procedures**

Before collecting the data, ethical approval for the research was provided by the NUGSE research committee. The participants were asked to participate in one-on-one interviews. The date and place were discussed beforehand. The data collection procedure was done through face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The interview helped the researcher to look deeply into the topic, as interviews helped to create a dialogue between the researcher and participants. When the research received ethical approval, parents were invited to participate and informed about the research's purpose and potential risks and benefits. The principles of the confidentiality of the participants and possible risks of the study were discussed with the participants. Participants were interviewed according to their schedules in the location that they preferred. The interviews lasted approximately 20-30 minutes. Participation was 100% voluntary; participants were assured that they could withdraw from the study at any time they wanted. Respondents had the right to refuse to answer particular



questions. At the end of the interview, the participant's contribution was mentioned, and the researcher expressed gratitude for their participation.

### **3.7. Data Analysis Methods**

The data analysis was done with the intent of analyzing the perception of inclusive education by parents who do not have a child with SEN. The topics that were the main focus of analysis: the parental views, parental attitudes, and understanding of inclusive education, parental views on possible challenges that may come along with the implementation of inclusive practices at mainstream schools, and possible advantages and disadvantages of inclusive education on typically developing children.

Qualitative data analysis can offer extensive and thorough insights into the experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of parents in studies on their opinions on inclusive education. The data analysis methods such as thematic analysis was used to analyze data from open-ended questions and interviews. This provided a deeper understanding of the views, experiences, and perceptions of parents regarding inclusive education. To analyze the data, parents' interview answers were grouped and developed into different coding categories (Creswell, 2012). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) defined coding as “assigning some sort of shorthand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of the data”.

Here are the four steps that were involved in the data analysis in this study:

1. Data transcription: audio recordings were turned into a text format.
2. Data coding: concepts, themes, or patterns were identified and assigned codes to them.
3. Data categorization: Once the data has been coded, it was organized into categories or themes that reflected the key concepts and patterns in the data. This process involves grouping similar codes together and identifying relationships between them.

4. Data interpretation: Data interpretation involves making sense of the data by identifying underlying meanings and patterns (Creswell, 2012). This involved looking for connections between the categories or themes and drawing conclusions about the views and experiences of parents regarding inclusive education.

### **3.8. Ethical Concerns and Risks of Research**

The interview process requires sufficient trust (Creswell, 2012), and critical issues may arise. Creswell (2012) wrote that it is crucial to inform participants about the purpose and significance of the study, be respectful while collaborating with participants, conduct an ethical interview, and maintain confidentiality. Patton (2002) offered a list of general ethical issues that need to be considered, such as reciprocity, risk assessment, confidentiality, informed consent, and data access and ownership.

Participation was fully voluntary. Participants read and signed a consent form where information about research, ethical issues, and possible benefits was included. In order to do everything possible to maintain confidentiality, the researcher assigned pseudonyms at the beginning of each interview to ensure the secure storage of electronic and hard copy data. On meeting with each participant, the researcher assigned the participant a pseudonym agreed upon with the participant and read through the informed consent form, providing the opportunity to answer any questions. The researcher also sought consent for the interview to be audio-recorded. The purpose of the consent form was to ensure participants that their right to privacy and confidentiality were taken into consideration in all aspects of the research, and the information would be only used in the study. It would not be shared with anyone for personal purposes. This audio recording was made on the researcher's smartphone. Once the participant signed the consent form, the interview began. If the participant appeared uncomfortable or became distressed at any time, the interview was stopped and the

researcher asked the participant if they wished to continue. All the collected data were coded and secured by saving it on a computer in a password-protected file.

This study has minimal risks as the participants of the study are parents. Complete confidentiality to the best extent possible was provided. To minimize the risk, the interview time, place, and date were arranged for the convenience of the respondents.

### **3.9. Summary**

The methods chapter of this study on perceptions of parents of typically developing children on inclusive education provided a detailed description of the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis methods used in the study.

This research used a qualitative design. The sampling strategy – purposeful sampling, and how participants were recruited and selected for the study were described. The specific methods used to collect data from participants were interviews. The details about the procedures used to ensure the ethical treatment of participants were also provided in this chapter. Qualitative analysis was used to analyze the data collected from participants. Possible risks and ethical concerns were described. Overall, the methods chapter gave a thorough and open account of the research process, allowing readers to judge the accuracy and dependability of the findings, which are presented in the following chapter.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data collection that was discussed in Chapter 3 and summarizes findings that were collected through face-to-face interviews. The data presented in this section aligns with the primary objective of the study, which was to understand the experiences and beliefs of parents of typically developing children on the topic of inclusive education.

After an analysis of the data collected through face-to-face interviews, three themes were identified (Table 1): parental attitudes toward children with SEN, possible challenges, and effects on typically developing children.

The research questions guiding the study were:

What are the parental attitudes of parents who do not have a child with SEN towards inclusive education?

What do parents see as the challenges for schools when implementing inclusive education policies?

What effect do parents believe inclusion has on a non-disabled child?

Because the study is qualitative in nature, a phenomenological research approach was used to examine the commonalities and differences across parents' lived experiences and understanding of inclusive education (Creswell, 2012). When conducting phenomenological research, the researcher usually starts by asking participants to describe their own encounters with a particular phenomenon of interest. The data is then analyzed by the researcher to find recurring themes and patterns in the descriptions provided by the participants.

**Table 1***Themes and Subthemes of the Findings Chapter*

Parental views on inclusive education	Challenges schools face	Effects of inclusive education on typically developing children
1. Knowledge of inclusive education 2. Attitudes	1. Barriers 2. Recommendations	1. Disadvantages 2. Advantages

The demographic information of the participants is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2***Characteristics of Participants*

Participants	Gender	Age	Level of education	Job in the field of education	Ages of the children
P1	Male	36	PhD	Yes, dean at the University	8
P2	Female	47	PhD	Yes, works as Chemistry teacher at the university, owns a kindergarten	9
P3	Female	41	Bachelor's	No	10
P4	Female	43	Bachelor's	No	6
P5	Female	38	Bachelor's	No	9
P6	Female	46	Bachelor's	No	8
P7	Male	35	Master's	No	8
P8	Male	48	Bachelor's	No	6

## **4.2. The Findings**

This section identifies views on inclusive practices and the understanding of inclusion by parents typically developing children. The first theme, "views on inclusion," presents an analysis of parents' responses, their overall awareness of inclusion, and their views. The identified sub-themes are parental knowledge of inclusive education and attitudes.

The second theme, "challenges that schools in Kazakhstan face" uncovers parents' opinions on the obstacles in schools in the implementation of inclusive education. The sub-themes that were identified here are barriers and recommendations. The participants shared their views on hardships in schools nowadays, what inclusion would look like in mainstream schools. They also provided recommendations on what should be done for Kazakhstani schools to implement inclusive practices.

The third theme is "effects of inclusive education on typically developing children," with possible advantages and disadvantages as the sub-themes. This section aimed to understand parents' beliefs of typically developing children on what they would consider beneficial or harmful if their children were in an inclusive setting.

## **4.3. Views on Inclusion**

### ***4.3.1. Knowledge of Inclusive Education***

This section of the research presents information on how parents of typically developing children understand inclusion and where this knowledge comes from. The researcher understands it is essential to recognize parents' awareness of inclusive education as a critical element toward its successful implementation.

Four out of eight parents knew nothing about inclusive education and needed an explanation. After the definition of inclusive education was presented to them, two participants mentioned they had heard the term but could not describe it. On the other hand,

four parents clearly understood what inclusive education is. “IE is the education for people with disabilities, when they study in the same classroom with normal children” (P2) Another parent had a slightly different interpretation of the term when he said, “It’s when children with special needs don’t feel themselves left out and feel like they are equal. At least they try to understand that they are not different from others” (P8).

According to participants’ answers, the most common sources of information on IE were the Internet, TV, and acquaintances. P3 said:

In general, I know about IE from the internet. There are a lot of talks about IE among parents too. Social media and TV are sources of information about inclusion. A few years ago, I didn’t hear about IE as much as I do now.

Out of eight participants, two work in the field of Education, and their job requires a basic knowledge of inclusive Education. P1, who works as a dean in a higher education institution, said:

I work in the field of Education; that’s why I know inclusive Education. I had an experience when I worked with children who had visual impairment. We tried to make an educational program to teach these students Excel and IT. We used audio devices for them to hear what they needed to do... Some things are being done in the area of inclusion.

Additionally, P2, a Chemistry teacher at the medical university who also owns a kindergarten, said:

I have a family business – we own a kindergarten. There are rules that we have to accept children with disabilities. But we don’t have these kinds of children. My jobs influenced my knowledge of IE... But I think that nowadays, information about IE is everywhere. I can’t believe that there are people who don’t know about inclusive

Education. I think that only close-minded people don't know about it. People who read the news and newspapers and watch TV will know. It's a basic thing to know.

However, the findings of this study illustrate that not everyone knows about inclusive Education; four out of eight parents did not know the definition of the term and said that no one in their close circle knows about inclusion or discusses it.

#### **4.3.2. Parental Attitudes**

Respondents gave different answers on their attitudes toward inclusive education. The results imply that three out of eight parents had a positive outlook on inclusion, three held a neutral view, and two were against inclusive practices.

Parents with positive attitudes toward inclusion explained that they believe all children deserve equal treatment. P1 explained his opinion by stating:

I think that it's better when children with disabilities can get equal education and do not feel left out. Emotionally and psychologically, it's better for them. When they study alongside typically developing children, I believe they will feel more comfortable. Of course, schools should have adequate study programs and curricula. If the school can provide suitable conditions, then inclusive education is the best option...

...I would send my typically developing child to an inclusive school because I believe it would positively impact my child.

Additionally, P2 was also positive about inclusive education when she expressed her opinion:

I think that children with SEN must study alongside typically developing children. They need socialization and communication. Normal children need to get used to seeing children who are different. And children with SEN shouldn't feel unwelcome and different in a wrong way. I think that it is correct if they will study together...



All three participants who had positive attitudes toward inclusion believed that inclusive practices are necessary for students with SEN and without SEN. They explained their position: “Children with disabilities are just children like mine. They have a right to study with others. Children can become more empathetic and understanding. Children will try to help” (P2). On the other hand, P5 looked at inclusion from the viewpoint of a mother of a typically developing child when she said:

In my opinion, I think that for our children, it would be necessary to understand that there are people who are different. That would be a good thing to experience. I think that studying alongside children with SEN would have a positive influence on my child. He would become more kind and more empathetic.

Three parents expressed neutral views on inclusion. They were open to inclusive education but believed that considerable work was necessary in this area for ideas to become a reality. Parents with neutral attitudes recognized the benefits of inclusive education but expressed a few concerns. For example, P3 worried about the comfort of children with SEN in the inclusive classroom. She said:

I don't know if children with SEN will feel comfortable alongside healthy children. They may feel left out. If typically developing children are taught to be kind to children with disabilities, it will be easier for children with SEN. When I was a child studying in school, everyone feared children with disabilities. We tried not to communicate with them. Special kids did not feel comfortable. Nowadays, we have to educate children that this is okay; they are just different, then these children will feel more welcomed and comfortable.

A concern expressed by P7 was the cruelty of children toward each other. He said:

As a parent, I understand parents of children with disabilities; of course, they want their child to be part of society and learn alongside other children to not feel different from others. I believe that children are very cruel. It is a matter of parenting children right.

Although he worried about the environment in the inclusive classroom, he commented, "I would send my children into an inclusive classroom, and I believe that children with disabilities are the same children as mine, and they deserve to have same opportunities." (P7). He also shared that he does not think schools are ready to have inclusive learning experiences: "I think we are not ready yet. I believe in IE's advantages, but I think much work needs to be done. Teachers, schools, awareness – there are many problems" (P7)

One parent believed that without proper conditions, the implementation of inclusion is not possible, and society is not ready yet (P8). Nevertheless, he added that inclusive education has its advantages for both students with and without SEN. Specifically, he said:

I think that inclusion is possible, but how well it goes depends on the conditions, budgeting, and ability to create the process of education and educational plans specifically for children with special needs. If all of this is not created, this person will be a weak link, and the program will be created considering this. It's not a good thing. If a child has problems, they need to be taken care of.

P3 also added that she has concerns about inclusive education, by saying:

I am concerned about the mental well-being of disabled children. I fear they will feel left out, unwelcomed, threatened, and maybe jealous. Maybe they should be around children like they are – in a particular school rather than feel uncomfortable around normal children.

It is important to note that the two parents had negative views toward implementing inclusive education. They were against inclusive education and believed that separate education is better for students with disabilities and typically developing students. P4 worried about the bullying of children with SEN; she believed that cruelty towards them could be avoided if they studied in special schools alongside similar kids. She explained her position by saying:

Generally, I think that I'm against inclusive education. I think that separate education is preferable. It is not because I am a mother of a typically developing child, but because I am more concerned for children with disabilities. Because in mainstream schools, where children are supposed to be equals, children are ruthless. They find some things to bully each other. They can hurt each other. If a child has a visible disability, he cannot do the same things as other children, especially in elementary school. I think that children with disabilities will suffer from inclusive setting more than typically developing students because children will be angry and can hurt them. Generally speaking, the ones suffering from IE – will be children with disabilities, and they will get hurt. It can traumatize them for life, and there is a big chance that they will be insecure. Some will become stronger from this experience, but some sensitive kids can be influenced negatively in life. Special schools for children with disabilities can be better for them. They will get a good-quality education and will not feel excluded around children like them.

Furthermore, P6 also expressed her negative attitude toward inclusive practices. Like P4, she was worried about the classroom environment and potential bullying of children with SEN. She said: "I am not sure that children with disabilities will feel comfortable. Children are cruel, and there may be bullying. I think parents of the special child will agree that this kind of education is not suitable for their child." Also, she was worried that children with

disabilities would be unable to keep up with the rest of the class. She added: “I think studying in the same environment as children without disabilities will be hard for them. I fear they will not be able to study on the same level as their peers.”

In conclusion, two out of eight participants had a background in education which could have influenced their knowledge of inclusion. Half of the participants needed an explanation to learn what inclusive education is. The attitudes toward inclusive practices varied; three were positive, three neutral, and two were negative.

#### **4.4. Theme 2: Challenges Schools Face**

##### **4.4.1. Barriers**

The study results revealed that parents believe there are different problems in the current situation with inclusion in Kazakhstani schools. These barriers are no appropriate conditions, lack of awareness among the population, lack of special education teachers, lack of financial support, overcrowded classes, and possible bullying.

All participants agreed on the lack of conditions in mainstream schools. For instance, P6 said, “Public schools do not have appropriate conditions. There are no ramps in schools or on the streets. Most of the time, toilets are not designed for people with disabilities.”

Additionally, P2 agreed that as long as the conditions for students with disabilities are not ideal, we cannot discuss inclusion. She said:

Nowadays all schools should have conditions for disabled students. Not talking about private schools, general mainstream schools too, should have conditions for disabled children. We have a lot to do because even though, we say that it’s important to have conditions, we can see that it’s still very difficult for handicapped to go around the city in a wheelchair.

These parents' responses represent the Kazakhstani reality where there is no proper preparation for children with SEN to study in mainstream schools. One parent shared:

Our schools do not have conditions at all. For example –no elevators, many stairs, and students in wheelchairs cannot drive in schools at all—lack of books for visually impaired children and resources for students with other disabilities. With short breaks in schools, students have 10 minutes to get to the canteen, eat, and run back to class. I cannot imagine a child with a disability in these conditions. PE classes are unsuitable for students with SEN and teachers, and curricula are not ready. Lack of special equipment. (P5)

Another barrier was a lack of awareness which led to a lack of knowledge about inclusive education among one of the main stakeholders in the implementation process: parents. For instance, P3 said: "There should be more awareness among everyone, not only people who are affected by disability, not only adults, children, too."

The lack of adequate professionals is another concern expressed by parents. They think that schools need more professional teaching staff for inclusive education to be a reality. All participants agreed that this is a serious concern that needs to be resolved. P3 mentioned: "I think teachers should be able to focus on everyone equally. But I don't know if they can, in a current situation." According to P7, "Teacher preparedness is a big problem. Even mainstream schools lack good teaching, without speaking about inclusive schools."

The parents believed that financial support from the government should be a priority in the process of the development of inclusion. However, there is a lack thereof, which was described as a barrier by participants of this study. P8 elaborated:

Unfortunately, a lack of financial support leads to a lack of enthusiasm. Life is hard, and I do not think anyone would want to work with children with disabilities without a

good salary. Teachers must be able to teach, and good conditions for them are necessary. Technical equipment is a must but isn't provided.

According to two participants, overcrowded classrooms are also a barrier. P6 believed, "Overcrowded classes, it is hard for typically developing children to study, not talking about children with disabilities." P2 explained her opinion by saying:

Teachers need to be ready, but classes are overcrowded. This is the problem that must be dealt with. If there were children with disabilities, teachers would be unable to teach correctly, and children would not get good quality education. For example, in my son's class, there are 30+ children. If there are fewer than 20 people, then it is possible.

All parents believed that there is also a possibility that teachers will pay extra attention to students with SEN, forgetting about other students, or the reverse could be true when teachers will not pay the necessary attention to children with disabilities. P3 shared: "I am afraid that attention and time will be more on children with SEN. The process of inclusion will take time. I think that teachers should be able to focus on everyone equally."

Participants identified bullying as a barrier to successful inclusive learning at schools. According to P5, "There may be bullying in an inclusive setting. That is why parents and teachers should educate children to prevent children with disabilities from being hurt." P7 believed that "Children are very cruel. It is a matter of parenting children right." Another parent agreed:

Children are ruthless. They will find some things to bully each other over. Children with disabilities can get hurt in an inclusive classroom. It can traumatize them for life, and there is a big chance that they will have insecurities. (P4)

The parent further explained that Kazakhstani society is not ready yet to have an inclusive environment because people with disabilities are not entirely accepted yet. It means

that, first of all, society has to change for changes to be visible. She said: “Children with disabilities are not accepted in our society. Most of the time, they stay at home. Parents of these children fear for them, and they fear that their children may get hurt.”

#### **4.4.2. Recommendations**

The participants also shared some recommendations as to what needs to be done for the implementation of inclusion to be successful.

Since bullying was considered an essential problem by participants, they gave their recommendations on the topic. For example, P4 said: “I try to educate my daughter on this topic, we went to the orphanage, she played with kids, and their differences did not matter to her. I believe that work between parent-child is crucial. It is important to teach kindness.” P3 had concerns about bullying too, and her recommendation was: “There should be talks with teachers, parents, and children to prevent bullying.” P2 shared:

Nowadays, all schools should have conditions for disabled students. I am not talking about private schools. Even general mainstream schools should have conditions for disabled children. Also, there should be more awareness among everyone, not only people affected by disability but all adults and children.

Another parent commented:

There are two important factors: parents and the rights of children with disabilities. Parents should be aware of the benefits of inclusion. And there should be protection for the rights of children with disabilities. That is why teachers should talk with parents. Society should become conscious of inclusive education. There should be a spread of awareness and protection of children. Collaboration between all stakeholders is crucial.

(P4)

P5 shared her story by saying:

If typically developing children are taught to be kind to children with disabilities, it will be easier for children with SEN. When I was a child studying in school, everyone feared children with disabilities. We tried not to communicate with them. Special kids did not feel comfortable. Nowadays, we have to educate children that this is okay, they are just different, then these children will feel more welcomed and comfortable.

P7 believed that there should be some punishment to prevent bullying. He believed, “I think that schools should have strict rules considering bullying. Students should be scared. The punishment should be as painful as expulsion.”

Four participants (P1, P6, P7, P8) agreed that there should be financial support from the government. They believe that problems such as lack of conditions, resources, and teacher training could be resolved if enough money is invested in inclusive education. Parents were worried about how exactly the money was spent and expressed the need for transparency. P2 said: “I do not know where the money goes because I do not see visible changes in the area of inclusion. The changes are promised, but they do not exist. We need actual changes in our society”. Participants believe progress is possible in inclusive education with financial support from the government.

Considering teachers, participants believe that they deserve higher income, better teacher training, and, overall, there should be more special education-oriented professionals. P4 also mentioned being empathetic: “I think empathetic teachers are rare in our educational system. However, it is a very important personality trait. There should be a major work between teachers, parents, and children. Parents should support their children. The psychologist should be involved too.”



Overall, parents believe that there should be a spread of awareness. P6 shared: “There should be more information in social media about inclusive education. Unfortunately, I have not heard about it anywhere and think this problem should be resolved. I think that everybody should know about inclusion.”

According to P2, “More awareness among everyone, not only people who are affected by disability, not only adults, children, too. There should be special pieces of training among the population that explain what inclusion is.” P5 said:

Everyone should talk about this issue (inclusive education) and ensure everyone knows about it. TV and social media should talk about it more. It can influence society in a good way. People’s thinking can change. Bloggers and influencers should pay attention to this problem and spread awareness.

Additionally, P4 believes that "These children should be visible and considered the norm. Collaboration between all stakeholders is crucial."

In conclusion, according to the participants' answers, there are currently several barriers to inclusive education in Kazakhstani schools that prevent the successful implementation of inclusion. There are no appropriate conditions, a lack of awareness among the population, financial support, overcrowded classes, and possible bullying and a lack of professionals – special education teachers, Parents believe these problems should be solved for the situation with inclusion to change. All of the parents agree that the lack of conditions is a serious concern. They also understand that lack of financial support to be a reason for the lack of conditions. Respondents believe that government should fund inclusive policies and make sure that conditions for people with disabilities are appropriate, as people with special needs are equally deserving of the same rights as others in society. Two parents were concerned about overcrowded classes and the inability of teachers to pay attention to all

students in mainstream schools. They fear that this problem could be worse in an inclusive classroom, where teachers cannot teach students with and without disabilities. Lack of awareness was another common response among the respondents. Some participants had never heard about inclusive education before and thought this should be changed. Finally, bullying was considered one of the barriers, according to parents' answers. Some said they believe children are cruel and need to be educated before studying alongside students with SEN.

Recommendations consisted of talks with parents and children, educating children on disabilities and inclusion, and spreading awareness via social media, television, and other forms of print and visual media. One of the suggestions to resolve the problem of overcrowded classes was to build more schools. Finally, financial support from the government is critical for the successful implementation of inclusive policies.

#### **4.5. Theme 3: Effects of Inclusive Education on Typically Developing Children**

##### **4.5.1. Advantages**

The parents believed that inclusive education would positively impact their typically developing children. All parents believe that a positive influence on their children is possible. For example, P1 said:

Children will realize that there are children who are different from them. They will start cherishing what they have, their health. They will learn not to take life and their privileges for granted. It is essential to show children the orphanages to get them into volunteering, and they will help others. They will understand that some people need help, and it will create the correct values in them. Children will learn to understand that it is important to help those in need. I believe that inclusive education would raise the level of self-consciousness and right values in society.

P2 believes in change that inclusive education will create:

Typically developing children need to get used to seeing children who are different.

Moreover, children with SEN should not feel unwelcome and different in a wrong way.

It is correct if they will study together. .... Children will see disabled children; they will help them and will become more kind.

Parents highlighted differences and how their children will understand that the world is diverse and has different people. According to P3: “Typically developing children should get used to the fact that there are people who have a disability and learn to accept that, learn to communicate with them. They should know they can befriend children with disabilities and communicate with them. It will be a fruitful experience for them.”

P4 shared her opinion on children and their attitudes toward each other and how parents have a significant influence on the way they perceive the world:

This year my child and I went to see an inclusive theatre. My daughter did not think about them like they were different. Perception of our children depends on what their parents tell them. I tried to educate my daughter on this topic, and when we went there, she played with kids, and their differences didn't matter to her. I believe that work between parent-child is crucial. It is important to teach kindness.

The participants identified several personality traits that would develop in their children if they studied with children with disabilities. They believe students will become more empathetic, kind, attentive, understanding, and caring. P8 shared:

The talk between parent and child is necessary. We as parents should explain to our children that some people may seem different, but they are a part of our society, and that is all right. Each person develops at their own pace. This child was born this way, and that is okay. Our children will become more compassionate and understanding.

They will become more tolerant and understanding and, in the future, will be more respectful of people.

#### **4.5.2. Disadvantages**

Among the disadvantages of inclusive education discussed by parents was the type of disability. Overall, all parents agreed that if a child is aggressive, they are against inclusive classrooms. P2 stated this about an aggressive child in the same classroom as her typically developing child:

Physical disability is okay. However, intellectual illness is a deal breaker. I think that they are aggressive, and I would not like a child like this in the same classroom as my child. I do not want my child to mimic his behavior; I am afraid my son will also become aggressive.

According to P3, "If a child is aggressive, then it is a problem. If a child creates conflict and has a psychological problem, I think he/she should study in a special school."

Parents of typically developing children have concerns about the safety of their children. P5 explained herself by saying:

As a mother, the safety of my child comes first. If a student in the classroom can harm my child or is aggressive, then I'm against it. That's my only concern. In other cases, I support any child with any disability.

Parent 7 shared his thoughts:

The main thing – is safety. I understand that there are children with visible psychological problems, but I would not want my child to study alongside someone like them. Some children are hard to control. They may be disruptive, which I do not want in a classroom. If a child is aggressive, then it is a no.

#### 4.6. Summary

This chapter presents responses of parents to interview questions on inclusive education in Kazakhstan. The questions were designed to answer the research questions.

Firstly, the interview data helps to understand the overall views on inclusion: knowledge of the term "inclusive education" and attitudes toward inclusion. According to the results, half of the respondents did not know what "inclusive education" is and needed an explanation. After the term was explained, they could articulate their unbiased opinion on whether they think inclusive education is a good idea. Out of eight, three parents had positive attitudes, three had neutral, and two were negative. Secondly, parents expressed what they perceive as barriers to inclusive education and provided recommendations. The identified barriers were inappropriate conditions for IE implementation in schools, lack of awareness among the population, lack of professionals such as special education teachers, lack of financial support, overcrowded classes, and bullying. Recommendations of parents consisted of ways of resolving the above problems. Lastly, the chapter discussed the effects of inclusion on typically developing children. Among the disadvantages, the most common answer was behavioral problems and aggression. Parents shared that they worry about the child's safety if the student with SEN interrupts the learning process and acts like a threat to his/her classmates. All parents agreed that inclusive education would positively influence their children. They believed their kids would become more empathetic, understanding, compassionate, and tolerant in an inclusive classroom.

## **5. Discussion**

### **5.1. Introduction**

Chapter five interprets and discusses the meaning of the findings presented in the previous chapter in terms of the theoretical framework and literature. The collected data was transcribed, coded, and categorically sorted (Creswell, 2021). The study had several research goals. Firstly, to study attitudes on inclusion by parents of typically developing children in Kazakhstan, Almaty. The next goal was to reveal the opinion of parents on the challenges schools face. Moreover, lastly, to study the views of parents on the potential disadvantages and benefits of inclusive education for their typically developing children.

The research design of the study was Phenomenology. The study will attempt to uncover the essence of the phenomenon and offer insights into the feelings and perceptions of this specific group of parents by employing a phenomenological approach. Using the phenomenological approach, themes that arise from the data were identified and grouped to provide a thorough knowledge of the participants' experiences and perspectives.

This chapter is presented in 2 sections – a comparison between the study's findings and the literature review and an analysis of the findings through Bandura's social cognitive theory (2001).

### **5.2. Findings**

An analysis of findings based on the results of the interviews of parents revealed the following information. The findings were based on three themes – views on inclusive education, challenges schools face, and effects of inclusive education on typically developing children. The analysis of findings was done using Bandura's social cognitive theory (2001).

Awareness and understanding:

To successfully implement inclusive education, awareness, and understanding are necessary. Half of the parents (4 out of 8) could define the term "inclusive education," while four participants had not heard of it or were somewhat unsure and needed an explanation of what the term meant. According to Alquraini and Gut (2012), a lack of understanding of the principles and practices of inclusive education among educators, parents, and the wider community can be a significant barrier to its implementation. The definition of inclusive education and what it implies should be understood by educators and schools alike. Primarily, parents have heard about inclusion from the Internet, TV, and acquaintances. Mittler (2000) stated that the media could be beneficial in promoting awareness and understanding of inclusive education.

According to Bandura's social cognitive theory (2001), social learning mechanisms, including observation and firsthand experience, are likely to impact parents' understanding of inclusion. As seen in the current study results, parents learned about inclusive practices by communicating with their acquaintances and experiencing the information through the Internet and TV. Additionally, when it comes to inclusion, parents' attention to information and experiences connected to inclusion, their capacity to remember and put this information to use, and their desire to look up and learn about inclusive behaviors may all impact how aware they are of these practices.

#### Attitudes

The attitudes of respondents toward inclusive practices varied. Positive or neutral attitudes prevailed, while two participants were negative. Studies on parental attitudes toward inclusion have revealed that parents generally have favorable attitudes about inclusive schooling (Vlachou et al., 2016; Paseka & Schwab, 2020). The study of Soodak et al. (2002) found that parents are more likely to support inclusive education when they feel that the

school environment is supportive and inclusive. This involves having access to resources and support services that are appropriate, having teachers who are aware of inclusion, and having a school culture that celebrates diversity and encourages understanding and acceptance of differences.

A study by Farrell and Ainscow (2002) found that some parents may have neutral attitudes toward inclusion because of past negative experiences with inclusive education. This is similar to the current study as parents responded that previously they had preconceptions about people with disabilities being excluded from the general public, and it may have had an influence on their perspective.

Parents who were against inclusive practices were concerned about the teachers not being able to pay attention to all students, which can lead to a poorer quality of education. According to Soodak et al. (2002), some parents may have negative attitudes toward inclusion because they are concerned that their child's academic performance will suffer in an inclusive classroom.

According to Bandura (2001), social learning is emphasized as a factor in determining attitudes and behaviors. This idea contends that people learn attitudes and opinions through both direct experience and observation of others. In other words, a number of societal factors are likely to have an impact on parents' attitudes toward inclusion. Additionally, according to the theory, parents' views toward inclusion may be influenced by their own perspectives on diversity and disability based on previous personal experiences.

### Barriers

Parents identified several barriers in the path toward inclusion - inappropriate conditions, lack of awareness among the population, lack of professionals – special education teachers, lack of financial support, overcrowded classes, and possible bullying. A study by



Mokaleng and Möwes (2020) had similar results; it stated that a lack of resources, including funding, staffing, and support services, can be a critical barrier to successful inclusive education. Lack of training and professional development for educators can be a significant barrier to inclusive education (Chitiyo et al., 2019). Participants were concerned about bullying in an inclusive setting as they believed children are cruel. They may be right because, according to Naylor and Cowie (1999), children with disabilities who were in inclusive classrooms experienced more bullying than those who were in non-inclusive classrooms.

Bandura (2001) emphasizes the value of social modeling, in which people pick up skills by imitating the actions of others. The critical point of Bandura's theory is how behavior affects attitudes and beliefs. A barrier to inclusion's implementation may be parents' ignorance or lack of understanding of its advantages. According to the theory, parents' behavior may be influenced by external factors such as previous experiences. This may lead to their beliefs about schools' unpreparedness to implement inclusive education. Additionally, a barrier to inclusion in parents' opinion may be the need for more resources and assistance in the community or educational setting.

### Recommendations

Recommendations included advice to talk with teachers, parents, and children on inclusion, differences, and bullying. They also recommended having more professionals in the field of special education and higher income for teachers to be motivated to work with more challenging students. Cook and Friend (1995) stress the need for professional development to support teachers in implementing inclusive practices. They recommend that professional development programs focus on providing teachers with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to support students with diverse needs and abilities. More financial

support from the government was mentioned. Parents noted the importance of talking with children and teaching them to be more compassionate.

According to Bandura's theory (2001), behavior is significantly influenced by motivation. This drive could originate from individual experiences, values, or convictions. The lives of all children, regardless of ability, may be improved by parents who are driven to advocate for inclusion and have recommendations to improve the current situation of inclusive education in Kazakhstan. These parents may advance a more equal and equitable society by advocating inclusivity.

#### Effects of inclusion

All parents concluded that there are more advantages than disadvantages for their children in an inclusive setting. However, they believe that the type of disability of a student with SEN matters. They said that if a student in the class has behavioral or visible psychological problems, they are against inclusion. They stated that they are scared for the safety of their children.

Bandura's (2001) theory suggests that children who are exposed to inclusive environments may see how well children with and without disabilities interact with one another. These observations might teach them that individual differences are natural and that diversity should be cherished. Parents of the current study view inclusion as having a positive impact on their children. They consider that inclusive practices will teach their kids to be more compassionate, empathetic, understanding, and accepting of differences. This view on inclusion is confirmed by the study of Tafa and Manolitsis (2003), which showed that typically developing children who participate in inclusive education programs tend to have more positive attitudes towards diversity and are more likely to acquire empathy and respect for others who are different from themselves. According to Mortimore and Zsolnai (2015),

inclusive education can provide typically developing children with opportunities to interact with students with diverse needs, enhancing their social skills and competence.

### **5.3. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory**

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001) asserts that social interactions with others, such as teachers, community members, and other parents, as well as past experiences, personal values, and societal norms and values, impact parents' attitudes and attitudes ideas toward inclusive education.

According to the theory, parents who have had positive experiences with inclusive education, personally or through others they know, may be more likely to have positive attitudes toward it. On the other hand, parents with bad experiences or unfavorable opinions and attitudes toward people with disabilities might be less open to inclusive education. Parents' relationships with educators and other parents may also impact their opinions regarding inclusive education. While negative interactions reinforce already negative attitudes, positive and supportive encounters assist parents in adopting more positive attitudes regarding inclusive education (Bandura, 2001).

The results were analyzed using Bandura's social cognitive theory (2001). The theory consists of the central concept, Reciprocal Determinism, which consists of 3 factors. They are the interaction of a person (individual with previously learned experience), environment (external factors), and behavior (responses to stimuli).

Firstly, parents as individuals have their own experiences regarding their children's education. It may be influenced by previous experience and may be caused by external causes. Considering inclusive education, parents may orient on their previous experience with people with disabilities and decide whether or not they would send their typically developing child into an inclusive setting. Parents may have had negative experiences with poorly

implemented inclusive education programs, which has led to their current attitudes toward the concept. Overall attitudes of parents toward inclusive practices are influenced by their previous experience.

Secondly, external factors such as television, the internet, and acquaintances may be why parents have specific opinions on inclusive education. Conditions in schools, the professionalism of teachers, and the challenges schools face may be why parents will or will not consider sending their children to inclusive schools.

Lastly, comparing Bandura's theory of the role of behavioral factors, there is a parallel between parental attitudes and children's behavior with SEN. In the case of unsafety and aggressive students, all parents agreed that they would not want their children to study in this environment. However, they believe that there may be positive behavior in the inclusive classroom. Participants believe that children will learn to help and understand one another, be patient, and become more empathetic. They say that children with and without SEN can influence each other to the point when they become better.

Educators and other stakeholders must acknowledge and address parents' worries and assumptions regarding inclusive education and give them the correct information and encouragement they need to develop positive perspectives. This can involve giving parents a chance to communicate with teachers and other parents and providing them with materials and training to assist them in understanding inclusive education.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

Through an in-depth analysis of the data collected, several significant conclusions and themes came to light, offering helpful insights into the intricate dynamics of inclusive education from the perspective of parents.

Bandura's social cognitive theory provides a comprehensive framework for examining parental perceptions of inclusive education. Applying Bandura's social cognitive theory to the study of parental perceptions of inclusive education reveals several important insights. Firstly, parents' beliefs and attitudes towards inclusive education are influenced by their observations and interactions with various social agents, including educators, other parents, and their own children. Additionally, Bandura's social cognitive theory emphasizes the significance of modeling and vicarious learning. Parents who have children in inclusive educational environments can observe and learn from the experiences and results of other parents.

This chapter has emphasized the significance of comprehending and attending to parental concerns, encouraging parent-teacher collaborations, and providing proper support and resources. We may work to create inclusive environments that suit the various requirements of all children by incorporating these insights into educational policies and procedures, fostering their holistic development and academic achievement.

## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1. Introduction

The present study was designed to examine parents' perceptions of typically developing children on inclusive education in Kazakhstan. In response to this research purpose, the following research questions were developed:

What are the perceptions of parents of typically developing children on inclusive education?

What do parents see as the challenges for schools when implementing inclusive education policies?

What effect do parents believe inclusion has on a non-disabled child?

The study used a qualitative research design. Bandura's (2001) social cognition theory was used as a lens to analyze the interview data. A portion of the interviewees' perspectives was consistent with Bandura's (2001) theory regarding the influence of the environment and individual aspects on behavior.

One of the study's main findings was that parents' attitudes toward inclusive education varied. Views of parents of typically developing children varied. Similar results were found in studies on parental attitudes toward inclusion, revealing that parents generally have favorable attitudes about inclusive schooling (Vlachou et al., 2016; Paseka & Schwab, 2020). Some parents may have ambivalent attitudes regarding inclusion due to prior unfavorable experiences with inclusive schooling, according to a study by Farrell and Ainscow (2002). According to Soodak et al. (2002), some parents may have negative attitudes regarding inclusion since they fear that their child's academic performance may suffer in an inclusive classroom. Another important discovery from this research is the lack of awareness about

inclusive education among parents of typically developing children. The primary sources of information about inclusive education that respondents identified were television, the Internet, and acquaintances.

Participants expressed concerns about the unreadiness of schools, the need for more professionals in the field of inclusion, and the lack of conditions and resources. This provides insight into another concern revealed from the parents' answers: overcrowded classrooms where the quality of education is not the best because teachers are incapable of giving equal treatment to everyone, especially children with disabilities. Potential bullying and misunderstanding of children with SEN were considered practical negative effects of an inclusive classroom. Another concern was the need for more financial support considering Kazakhstan's current developing state of inclusive education. Teacher training and special teachers' education were identified as essential factors that need to be considered in the path toward successful inclusion. Similar findings were found in a study by Mokaleng and Möwes (2020), which found that a lack of resources, such as finance, staffing, and support services, can be a significant impediment to inclusive education. Parental recommendations were to raise awareness, increase financial support, provide teachers with additional education, hold discussions on inclusion and bullying with students, parents, and teachers, decrease the number of students in classrooms, and provide appropriate conditions.

Another significant finding to emerge from this study is that parents believed that inclusion would have a more positive effect rather than negative on their non-disabled children. They noted that becoming more empathetic, compassionate, and understanding are among the advantages of inclusive education. All parents agreed that their children would understand the world better and that knowing that there are people who are different from them would positively impact them. Mortimore and Zsolnai (2015) claim that inclusive education can give typically developing kids the chance to connect with students with

disabilities, which can improve their social skills and social competency. Participants believed that there could be adverse effects if a child was aggressive. Behavioral or intellectual disabilities were identified as a reason to be against inclusive classrooms. Overall, parents were more concerned about children with disabilities rather than typically developing children. They identified cruelty to children and possible bullying as big problems and recommended educational talks for students, parents, and teachers.

## **6.2. Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

Parental attitudes about inclusive education are a complex and developing area of research. Among the strengths of this research are the research problem's uniqueness and relevance. There is a limited amount of research on parental views on inclusive education in Kazakhstan. In this study, their opinions were studied and understood, allowing them to arrive at certain conclusions and suggestions. Insights into the experiences and attitudes of families who are not directly impacted by a disability or other special needs can be gained by researching the opinions of parents of typically developing children. This can assist in highlighting points of agreement and disagreement as well as potential obstacles and chances to advance inclusive education. Another benefit of this research is that it can provide insights about effectively involving families and communities in campaigns to promote inclusive education. These insights can be gained by examining parents' perspectives who have typically developing children. This can assist in identifying efficient communication strategies as well as potential obstacles and opportunities to forge cooperation with families.

While there are some advantages to studying parents' perspectives on inclusive education, there are also some limitations in the research. Firstly, parents' opinions of typically developing children might not be indicative of those of other stakeholders, including parents of children with disabilities, educators, or policymakers. The results of such research



might therefore be limited in generalizability. A second potential limitation is that parents from different backgrounds or those with less access to information on inclusive education may need to be better represented in research. This may restrict the research's potential and preclude a thorough knowledge of parents' perspectives. Another concern is that by framing parents' opinions of typically developing children as the normative or dominant perspective, research may reinforce misconceptions about the capabilities and needs of children with disabilities. Research on parents' attitudes and perceptions about inclusive education may concentrate more on attitudes and perceptions than practical information about implementing inclusive education in schools and communities. As this was a small study that only focused on one city, it cannot be generalized to other areas of Kazakhstan. Because of this, the findings might be less helpful to educators and decision-makers who want to advance inclusive education.

### **6.3. Implications**

This section addresses implications for practitioners and decision-makers. The study's findings point to several theoretical and practical consequences despite the possible limitations. Among these implications are the following:

Practitioners and decision-makers should encourage parents' participation in inclusive education. Parents actively involved in their children's education are more likely to favor inclusive education and fight for their needs.

The study emphasizes the need for policymakers, educators, and the general public to understand the advantages of inclusive education better. While educators should be given enough training and resources to implement inclusive practices in their classrooms successfully, policymakers should give priority to the development of legislation that promote and support inclusive education.

Practitioners and decision-makers should address parents' worries regarding inclusive education. Some parents may be concerned that their child will not get as much attention in an inclusive classroom or that their child's education will suffer due to the inclusion of kids with disabilities. In order to allay these worries, pertinent information regarding the advantages of inclusive education must be shared with parents.

Teachers and other education professionals should receive training from practitioners and decision-makers on successfully applying inclusive education strategies. Teachers must have the essential knowledge and abilities to fulfill the various needs of every student in their classrooms.

Working closely with parents will help educators and policymakers address their concerns and teach them about the advantages of inclusive education. As a result, parents' trust and support for inclusive education may increase.

#### **6.4. Suggestions for Future Research**

Much work remains to be done before fully understanding the extent of parental perception is established. Here are some recommendations for future research:

Investigate the differences between the perspectives of parents of typically developing children and those of parents of children with disabilities regarding the advantages and difficulties of inclusive education for their children.

Examine the effects of parents' cultural backgrounds and values on how they view inclusive education and how this may affect their decision to enroll their child in an inclusive school.

Investigate how parent-teacher collaborations can help all kids, including those with disabilities, get inclusive education.

Examine how inclusive education affects all students' sociability and emotional growth, including typically developing children.

### **6.5. Concluding Thoughts**

Understanding parental perceptions and concerns is crucial for ensuring successful inclusion. The author hopes that the current research will lead to more research in the vital field of parents and their opinions on inclusive education.

The study has shown that parental views on inclusion varied; however, most participants believed in the importance of inclusive education for typically developing students and children with disabilities. Parents expressed their concerns about the readiness of schools and society overall. These results show that inclusive education in Kazakhstan is in a state of development. The potential effects of inclusive education on children's sociability, emotional growth, and academic results have also been highlighted by this study. Overall, research on parents of typically developing children's perceptions of inclusive education emphasizes how critical it is to comprehend parental views and concerns to promote successful inclusion.

The author believes in the importance of parental support of inclusion, as they are one of the main stakeholders in this development process of inclusive education. The author's time immersed in the issue of parental views on inclusion has significantly altered how she views typically developing children with special needs, and their parents. Additionally, the author learned more about schools, the current condition of inclusive education in Kazakhstan, and problems and concerns. Overall, working on this research has strengthened the author's ambition to work in the field of inclusive education.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

#### Parental Perceptions of Inclusive Education in Almaty, Kazakhstan: Parents of Typically Developing Children

**DESCRIPTION:** You are invited to participate in a research study investigating parents' views on Inclusive Education (IE). You will be asked to take part in a face-to-face interview, which will be audio recorded in order to assure an accurate and complete record of the interview.

**TIME INVOLVEMENT:** Your participation will take approximately 30 minutes.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS:** The risks associated with this study are minimal. In case you may feel stressed or uncomfortable answering the questions, it is within your right to refuse to answer any of the questions or be interviewed. The benefits which may reasonably be expected to result from this study are sharing what you know and don't know about Inclusive Education, which may lead to a better understanding of the perceptions of parents of typically developing children on Inclusive Education. Your decision on whether or not to participate in this study will not have any affect your child's current school placement.

**PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS:** If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand your **participation is voluntary** and you have the **right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The alternative is not to participate.** You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. The results of this research study may be presented at scientific or professional meetings or published in scientific journals where the participants' confidentiality will be ensured.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION:

If you have any questions about the research, please contact me or my supervisor.

Delima Beisembayeva

Researcher student of Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education

[delima.beisembayeva@nu.edu.kz](mailto:delima.beisembayeva@nu.edu.kz) +7 777 734 9576

Associate Professor Janet Helmer

Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education

[janet.helmer@nu.edu.kz](mailto:janet.helmer@nu.edu.kz) +7 7172 704970

#### Independent Contact:

If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the NUGSE Research Committee to speak to someone independent of the research team. You can also write an email to the NUGSE Research Committee at [gse\\_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz](mailto:gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz). Or call +7 7172 709359.

Please sign this consent form if you agree to participate in this study.

- I have carefully read the information provided;
- I have been given full information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study;

- I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason;
- With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**ЗЕРТТЕУ ЖҰМЫСЫ КЕЛІСІМІНІҢ АҚПАРАТТЫҚ ФОРМАСЫ**  
**Қазақстан, Алматыдағы инклюзивті білім беруді ата-аналардың**  
**қабылдауы: қалыпты дамып келе жатқан балалардың ата-аналары**

**СИПАТТАМА:** Сіздерді Қазақстанның негізгі мектептерінде инклюзивті білім беруді енгізуге дайындығы туралы ата-аналардың пікірі бойынша сауалнамаға қатысуға шақырамыз. Сізден жеке сұхбатқа немесе фокус-топқа қатысу сұралады, ол дыбыс жазу құрылғысына жазылады, содан кейін жиналған деректердің дұрыстығына көз жеткізу үшін деректерді талдау жүргізіледі.

**ӨТКІЗІЛЕТІН УАҚЫТЫ:** Сіздің қатысуыңыз шамамен 30 минут уақытыңызды алады.

**ЗЕРТТЕУ ЖҰМЫСЫНА ҚАТЫСУДЫҢ ҚАУІПТЕРІ**

**МЕНАРТЫҚШЫЛЫҚТАРЫ:** Зерттеу жұмысына қатысудың қауіптері минималды. Егер сізге кейбір сұрақтарға жауап беруге ыңғайсыз болса, Сіз кез-келген сұхбаттасудан бас тарта аласыз.

Осы зерттеуден нәтижелі болуы мүмкін артықшылықтар инклюзивті білім беруді іске асыруда қандай қиыншылықтар бар екендігін бөлісуі, бұл білім беру органдарының сапалы қолдауына әкелуі мүмкін. Зерттеудің күтілетін пайдасы ретінде сіз инклюзивті білім беру туралы білетіндеріңізбен бөлісе аласыз, бұл қалыпты дамып келе жатқан балалардың ата-аналары арасында инклюзивті білім беру туралы хабардар болуын түсінуге әкеледі. Осы зерттеуге қатысу немесе қатыспау туралы шешім Сіз өзіңіз шешесіз. Зерттеу жұмысына қатысуыңыздың келесідей артықшылықтары болуы мүмкін: Зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға келісім беруіңіз немесе бас тартуыңыз Сіздің жұмысыңызға, еш әсерін тигізбейді.

**ҚАТЫСУШЫ ҚҰҚЫҚТАРЫ:** Егер Сіз берілген формамен танысып, зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға шешім қабылдасаңыз, Сіздің қатысуыңыз ерікті түрде екенін хабарлаймыз. Сонымен қатар, қалаған уақытта айыппұл төлемей және сіздің әлеуметтік жеңілдіктеріңізге ешкесірін тигізбей зерттеу жұмысына қатысу туралы келісіміңізді кері қайтаруға немесе тоқтатуға құқығыңыз бар. Зерттеу жұмысына мүлдем қатыспауыңызға да толық құқығыңыз бар. Сондай-ақ, қандайда бір сұрақтарға жауап бермеуіңізге де әбден болады. Бұл зерттеу жұмысының нәтижелері академиялық немесе кәсіби мақсаттарда баспаға ұсынылуы немесе шығарылуы мүмкін.

**БАЙЛАНЫС АҚПАРАТЫ:**

Осы зерттеуге қатысты сұрақтарыңыз болса, маған немесе жетекшіме хабарласыңыз.

Бейсембаева Дәлима

Назарбаев Университетінің Жоғары Білім Мектебінің ғылыми қызметкері  
[delima.beisembayeva@nu.edu.kz](mailto:delima.beisembayeva@nu.edu.kz) +7 777 734 9576

Профессор Жанет Хелмер

Назарбаев Университеті, Жоғары Білім Беру Мектебі  
[janet.helmer@nu.edu.kz](mailto:janet.helmer@nu.edu.kz) +7 7172 704970

**Дербес Байланыс Ақпараттары:**

Егер берілген зерттеу жұмысының жүргізілуімен қанағаттанбасаңыз немесе сұрақтарыңыз бен шағымдарыңыз болса, Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары Білім беру мектебінің Зерттеу Комитетімен көрсетілген байланыс құралдары арқылы

хабарласуыңызға болады, электрондық пошта [gse\\_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz](mailto:gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz) немесе +7 7172 709359 нөміріне қоңырау шалыңыз.

Зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға келісіміңізді берсеңіз, берілген формаға қол қоюыңызды сұраймыз.

- Мен берілген формамен мұқият таныстым;
- Маған зерттеу жұмысының мақсаты мен оның процедурасы жайында толық ақпарат берілді;
- Жинақталған ақпарат пен құпия мәліметтерге тек зерттеушінің өзіне қолжетімді және мәлім болатынын толық түсінемін;
- Мен кез келген уақытта ешқандай түсініктемесіз зерттеу жұмысына қатысудан бас тартуыма болатынын түсінемін;
- Мен жоғарыда аталып өткен ақпаратты саналы түрде қабылдап, осы зерттеу жұмысына қатысуға өз келісімімді беремін.

Қолы: \_\_\_\_\_ Күні: \_\_\_\_\_  
Тергеушінің қолы \_\_\_\_\_

**ФОРМА ИНФОРМАЦИОННОГО СОГЛАСИЯ**  
**Восприятие Инклюзивного Образования Родителями в Казахстане,**  
**Алматы: Родители Типично Развивающихся Детей**

**ОПИСАНИЕ:** Вы приглашены принять участие в исследовании взглядов родителей на инклюзивное образование в Казахстане. Вам будет предложено принять участие в индивидуальном интервью, которое будет записано на диктофон с последующим анализом данных для обеспечения точности собранных данных.

**ВРЕМЯ УЧАСТИЯ:** Ваше участие потребует около 30 мин.

**РИСКИ И ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВА:** Риски, связанные с исследованием минимальные. В случае если Вам будет неловко отвечать на некоторые вопросы, Вы можете отказаться от интервью в любое время. В качестве ожидаемых преимуществ в результате исследования можно рассматривать Вашу возможность это поделиться тем, что вы знаете об инклюзивном образовании, что может привести к пониманию осведомленности об инклюзивном образовании среди родителей типично развивающихся детей. Ваше решение о согласии либо отказе в участии никаким образом не повлияет на: Вашу работу и карьеру.

**ПРАВА УЧАСТНИКОВ:** Если Вы прочитали данную форму и решили принять участие в данном исследовании, Вы должны понимать, что Ваше участие является добровольным и что у Вас есть право отозвать свое согласие или прекратить участие в любое время. В качестве альтернативы можно не участвовать в исследовании. Также Вы имеете право не отвечать на какие-либо вопросы. Результаты данного исследования могут быть представлены или опубликованы в научных или профессиональных целях, с сохранением конфиденциальности.

**КОНТАКТНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ:**

Если у вас есть вопросы касательно данного исследования, Вы можете связаться со мной или моим научным руководителем.

Бейсембаева Дэлима

Исследователь студент Назарбаев Университета, Высшая Школа Образования

[delima.beisembayeva@nu.edu.kz](mailto:delima.beisembayeva@nu.edu.kz) +7 777 734 9576

Ассоциированный Профессор Джанет Хелмер

Назарбаев Университет, Высшая Школа Образования

[janet.helmer@nu.edu.kz](mailto:janet.helmer@nu.edu.kz) +7 7172 704970

**Независимый контакт:**

Если Вы не удовлетворены проведением данного исследования, если у Вас возникли какие-либо проблемы, жалобы или вопросы, Вы можете связаться с Комитетом Исследований Высшей Школы Образования Назарбаев Университета отправить письмо на электронный адрес [gse\\_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz](mailto:gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz), или позвонить по телефону +7 7172 709359.

Пожалуйста, подпишите данную форму, если Вы согласны участвовать в исследовании.

- Я внимательно изучил представленную информацию;
- Мне предоставили полную информацию о целях и процедуре исследования;



- Я понимаю, как будут использованы собранные данные, и что доступ к любой конфиденциальной информации будет иметь только исследователь;
- Я понимаю, что вправе в любой момент отказаться от участия в данном исследовании без объяснения причин;
- С полным осознанием всего вышеизложенного я согласен принять участие в исследовании по собственной воле.

Подпись: \_\_\_\_\_ Дата: \_\_\_\_\_

Подпись исследователя: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

**Project title:** Parental Attitudes toward Inclusive Education in Kazakhstan

**Interviewee:**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Place:**

**Preliminary procedures:** introducing self, the purpose of the study, and confidentiality, getting permission to audio record; signing the consent form.

**Dear Participant,**

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the interview which is part of my master's thesis program. The following questions will help me learn more about your views toward the inclusive education in Kazakhstan. During the interview there may be some additional questions that will help me clarify your answers. I would like to remind you that all your responses will be kept confidential, and your will be changed when presented in my thesis.

**Participant Interview Questions:**

- 1) What is your level of education? (School, University, etc.)
- 2) How would you describe inclusive education in your own words?
- 3) From where do you know about inclusive education?
- 4) Do you think that children with disabilities can study with typically developing students? Why?
- 5) What positive influence does inclusive education have on typically developing children?
- 6) Would you enroll your child in an inclusive school? If yes, why? If not, why?
- 7) What are the advantages of inclusive education, in your opinion?
- 8) What are the disadvantages of inclusive education, in your opinion?
- 9) Does the type of disability of your child's classmate affect your opinion on whether your child will stay in the class or not?
- 10) What do you think about the development of inclusive education in Kazakhstan?
- 11) Do you have concerns about inclusive education in Kazakhstan?

Thank the participant for the interview. Assure them again about the confidentiality of received information.

## Appendix C

### Sample of Transcript

**Interviewee:** P3

**Date:** 14.11.2022

**Time:** 15:00

**Place:** Kazakh National Medical University

**Preliminary procedures:** introducing self, the purpose of the study, and confidentiality, getting permission to audio record; signing the consent form.

**1. Tell me your level of education.**

Doctoral candidate

**2. How would you describe inclusive education in your own words?**

Inclusive education is an education for people with disabilities when they study in the same classroom as typically developing children.

**3. From where do you know about IE?**

I have a family business – we own a kindergarten. There are rules that we have to accept children with disabilities. But we don't have these kinds of children. This job influenced my knowledge of inclusive education, and also, in the past, there was a separation, children with disabilities studied separately. Nowadays, the focus is more on inclusion.

I think that nowadays, information about IE is everywhere. Only close-minded people don't know about IE. People who read the news and newspapers and watch TV will know. It is an essential thing to know.

**4. Do you think that students with SEN can study with typically developing students?**

I think that it's necessary for children with SEN to study alongside typically developing children. They need socialization, and communication. Normal children need to get used to seeing children who are different. Moreover, children with SEN should not feel unwelcomed and different in a bad way. I think that it is correct if they will study together.

**5. What positive influence does inclusive education have on typically developing children?**

The world nowadays is very cruel, and children see this cruelty. Children will see disabled children, they will help them, and will become more kind.

**6. Would you send your typically developing child to an inclusive school? If yes/no, why?**

I wouldn't send my child to an inclusive school, but I wouldn't mind if a child with SEN studied alongside my child.

**7. What are the advantages of inclusive education, in your opinion?**

Typically developing children will become more tolerant. In the future, they will see different people in our society. CwD will feel a part of a community. Their peers will accept them. Both children will communicate and understand one another.

**8. What are the disadvantages of inclusive education, in your opinion?**

I don't see disadvantages in IE, only advantages if only conditions in schools would be appropriate.

**9. Does the type of disability of your child's classmate affect your opinion on whether your child will stay in the class or not?**

Yes, it does. Physical disability is okay. But intellectual illness is a dealbreaker. I think that they are aggressive, and I wouldn't like a child like this in the same classroom as my child. I don't want my child to mimic his behavior. I'm afraid that my son will become aggressive, too.

**10. What do you think about the development of inclusive education in Kazakhstan?**

Nowadays, all schools should have conditions for disabled students. Not talking about private schools; even public mainstream schools should have conditions for disabled children. We have a lot to do because even though we say that it's important to have conditions, we can see that it's still tough for handicapped to go around the city in a wheelchair.

**11. Do you have concerns about inclusive education in Kazakhstan?**

Conditions that are being created are not well made. I do not know if children with disabilities are able to study in a mainstream school. More awareness among everyone, not only people who are affected by disability, not only adults, children, too. The lack of conditions concerns me.

Teachers need to be ready, but classes are overcrowded. This is the problem that has to be dealt with. If there were children with disabilities, teachers wouldn't be able to teach correctly. Children will not get good quality education. For example, in my son's class, there are 30+ children. If there are fewer than 20 people, then it's possible.