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Research Paper

Teacher–Parent Collaboration in Inclusive Early Childhood Education: A Systematic Review and Qualitative Case Study on Attention Regulation in Children with ADHD

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Abstract

This study aims to examine how teacher–parent collaboration supports attention regulation in children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) within inclusive early childhood education. Using a sequential multi-method design, the study integrates a systematic literature review (SLR) and a qualitative case study conducted at an inclusive early childhood education center. The SLR synthesizes empirical evidence on collaboration patterns, mechanisms, and outcomes, while the case study provides contextual insights into how collaboration is enacted in practice. The findings reveal that teacher–parent collaboration operates as a multi-dimensional and ecological system, encompassing communication-based partnership, joint assessment and planning, and behavioral–emotional support. These forms of collaboration influence attention through key mechanisms, including alignment of routines across home and school, shared understanding of the child, adult emotional regulation, and coordinated behavioral support. The results further demonstrate that attention regulation is not solely an individual cognitive capacity but a context-dependent outcome shaped by relational, instructional, emotional, and environmental coherence. This study contributes to the field by advancing an integrative model of collaboration that bridges global evidence and contextual practice. The findings highlight the importance of positioning teacher–parent collaboration as a central mechanism in inclusive education to support sustained attention and learning engagement in early childhood.

Keywords: *teacher–parent collaboration; ADHD; inclusive early childhood education; attention regulation; family–school partnership*

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become a central global agenda in ensuring equitable access to quality learning for all children, including those with neurodevelopmental conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Within early childhood education settings, children with ADHD often experience persistent challenges related to attention regulation, impulsivity, and behavioral control, which may hinder their academic engagement and social participation (DuPaul & Stoner, 2020; Faraone et al., 2021; Sayal et al., 2018). These challenges are particularly critical during early developmental stages, as foundational executive functions—such as sustained attention and self-regulation—are rapidly developing and highly sensitive to environmental influences (Willoughby et al., 2021). Consequently, inclusive early childhood education requires not only adaptive pedagogical strategies but also coordinated support systems that extend beyond the classroom.

Recent research highlights that effective inclusive practices cannot rely solely on teacher competence or classroom interventions but must be supported by strong partnerships between schools and families. Teacher–parent collaboration has been widely recognized as a key mechanism for enhancing learning outcomes and behavioral regulation in children with ADHD, particularly through consistency in expectations, communication, and intervention strategies across home and school contexts (Sheridan et al., 2020). Empirical studies suggest that coordinated efforts between teachers and parents contribute to improved attention, reduced behavioral problems, and increased engagement in learning activities (Power et al., 2021). Moreover, collaborative approaches that integrate emotional support for parents—such as mindfulness-based interventions—have been shown to indirectly strengthen children's attention regulation by reducing parental stress and improving parent–child interactions (Lo et al., 2021).

Despite the growing body of literature on inclusive education and ADHD, existing studies remain fragmented in two important ways. Teacher–parent collaboration has been widely recognized as a key mechanism for improving children's academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes, particularly when collaboration involves bidirectional communication, shared planning, and coordinated support across home and school contexts (Smith et al., 2020). Second, while systematic reviews have synthesized evidence on ADHD interventions, ADHD is one of the most prevalent neurodevelopmental disorders in childhood, with global prevalence estimates consistently reported across decades of research (Polanczyk et al., 2015). This gap indicates the need for a more integrative perspective that not only synthesizes existing evidence but also contextualizes how collaboration operates in real educational settings.

Furthermore, most existing studies are dominated by quantitative approaches, which, although valuable for identifying general patterns, often fail to capture the contextual and relational dynamics underlying collaborative practices. Qualitative inquiry, particularly through case studies, offers deeper insights into how teacher–parent collaboration is experienced, negotiated, and enacted in specific educational contexts (Flick, 2022). Integrating systematic evidence synthesis with qualitative case-based understanding therefore provides a more comprehensive approach to examining both the generalizable patterns and the contextual complexities of collaboration in inclusive education.

Responding to these gaps, this study adopts a sequential multi-method design by integrating a systematic literature review (SLR) with a qualitative case study. The SLR aims to synthesize current evidence on the forms, mechanisms, and outcomes of teacher–parent collaboration in supporting attention among young children with ADHD, while the qualitative case study provides contextual depth by exploring how such collaboration is implemented and experienced in practice. By bridging evidence and context, this study seeks to contribute to the development of a more

holistic understanding of collaborative practices in inclusive early childhood education.

Specifically, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) What forms and patterns of teacher–parent collaboration are identified in the literature on inclusive early childhood education for children with ADHD? (2) How does such collaboration influence attention regulation and learning focus in young children? and (3) What factors facilitate or hinder effective collaboration between teachers and parents in inclusive settings? Through this integrative approach, the study aims to provide both theoretical and practical insights to inform more effective, responsive, and sustainable collaborative practices in early childhood inclusive education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher–Parent Collaboration in Inclusive Education for Children with ADHD

Teacher–parent collaboration is increasingly recognized as a central mechanism for supporting children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), particularly in inclusive educational settings. ADHD is not merely a behavioral difficulty but a complex neurodevelopmental condition associated with impairments in attention, executive functioning, emotional regulation, and adaptive functioning (Faraone et al., 2024). In school contexts, these difficulties often appear as inconsistent task engagement, distractibility, impulsive responses, difficulty following instructions, and challenges in sustaining learning focus. Therefore, inclusive education for children with ADHD requires more than classroom placement; it demands coordinated support between teachers, parents, and the broader school system.

Recent evidence suggests that effective support for children with ADHD is strongest when school and home interventions are aligned. A cluster randomized controlled trial in China found that parent–teacher training improved ADHD symptoms, academic performance, and parental anxiety, indicating that collaboration can strengthen both child outcomes and family functioning (Shen et al., 2021). Similarly, school-based randomized controlled trials show that interventions in educational settings can improve inattention, academic performance, social skills, and externalizing problems among children and young people with ADHD (Yegencik et al., 2025). These findings highlight that teacher–parent collaboration should not be treated as an additional support activity but as a core component of inclusive intervention.

Attention Regulation and Executive Function in Early Childhood

Attention regulation in early childhood is closely related to executive function development. Children with neurodevelopmental conditions show delays in attention and executive functioning during the first five years of life, with executive function difficulties becoming more visible during the preschool period (Lee et al., 2025). This is particularly relevant for children with ADHD because sustained attention, inhibitory control, working memory, and emotional regulation are essential for classroom participation. When these functions are underdeveloped, children may struggle to complete activities, follow routines, and participate meaningfully in group learning.

The relationship between ADHD symptoms, emotion regulation, and executive function also suggests that learning focus should not be understood narrowly as "paying attention" during classroom tasks. Landis et al. (2021) emphasize that preschool ADHD symptoms are associated with both executive function and emotion regulation, suggesting that attention problems are embedded in broader self-regulatory processes. This means that teachers and parents need shared strategies that support routines, emotional co-regulation, behavioral consistency, and structured learning environments. Without shared understanding between home and school, children may receive inconsistent cues that weaken their ability to regulate attention across contexts.

Family–School Partnership as a Mechanism of Support

Family–school partnership provides a framework for understanding how collaboration can influence children's learning and developmental outcomes. Smith et al. (2020) found that family–

school partnership interventions have positive effects on academic and social-emotional functioning, especially when they include communication, shared planning, and coordinated behavioral support. For children with ADHD, this partnership is particularly important because attention-related difficulties are often context-dependent; a child's behavior may vary between home and school depending on routines, expectations, emotional climate, and adult responses.

The quality of collaboration also depends on how teachers and parents interpret the child's needs. Discrepancies between parent and teacher reports of hyperactivity or inattention are common and may be influenced by parental education, parenting stress, mental health, socioeconomic conditions, and cultural expectations (Chan et al., 2024). This evidence is important because disagreement between teachers and parents should not be seen simply as resistance or lack of cooperation. Instead, it reflects different ecological contexts in which the child's behavior is observed. Therefore, effective collaboration requires dialogic communication, mutual trust, and shared interpretation of the child's behavior.

Parental Stress, Mindfulness, and Emotional Support

Parents of children with ADHD often experience emotional burden, self-blame, difficulty managing symptoms, pressure from schools, and challenges navigating health and educational systems (Chen et al., 2025). These challenges may affect the quality of parent–teacher communication and the consistency of support provided at home. In inclusive education, parental emotional well-being is therefore not a peripheral issue; it is directly connected to the child's learning environment.

Mindfulness-based interventions offer one promising pathway for strengthening family support. Valero et al. (2022) found that mindfulness training for children with ADHD and their parents reduced parenting stress and improved parenting styles, with follow-up improvements in children's inattention symptoms, executive functions, learning problems, aggression, and peer relations. This suggests that teacher–parent collaboration should include emotional and psychoeducational support for parents, not only academic reporting or administrative meetings. When parents are emotionally supported, they are more able to apply consistent strategies at home and communicate constructively with teachers.

Research Gap and Conceptual Positioning

Although existing studies provide strong evidence for school-based interventions, parent–teacher training, and family support, the literature remains fragmented. Much of the current evidence examines school interventions, parent interventions, or child outcomes separately. Fewer studies integrate these dimensions into a coherent explanation of how teacher–parent collaboration supports attention regulation in inclusive early childhood education. This gap is especially important because attention regulation in children with ADHD develops across ecological contexts, not only within the classroom.

Therefore, this study positions teacher–parent collaboration as a relational and ecological mechanism that connects inclusive pedagogy, parental support, and child self-regulation. By integrating systematic literature review findings with qualitative case study evidence, the study seeks to bridge global research evidence and contextual practice. This approach is expected to generate a deeper understanding of how collaboration is formed, how it influences attention regulation, and what factors support or hinder its implementation in inclusive early childhood settings.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a sequential multi-method design integrating a systematic literature review (SLR) and a qualitative case study to provide both evidence-based synthesis and contextual understanding of teacher–parent collaboration in supporting attention regulation among young

children with ADHD. The SLR phase aims to identify, evaluate, and synthesize empirical findings from prior studies, while the qualitative case study explores how collaboration is enacted in real educational settings. This integrative approach allows the study to bridge generalizable knowledge with contextual insights, which is particularly important in complex educational phenomena such as inclusive practices (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Systematic Literature Review (SLR) Phase

Search Strategy

The SLR was conducted following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines to ensure transparency and rigor in the identification, screening, and inclusion of relevant studies (Page et al., 2021). Literature searches were performed across five major academic databases: Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, ScienceDirect, and DOAJ. These databases were selected to ensure comprehensive coverage of high-quality, peer-reviewed research in education, psychology, and child development. The search strategy was developed using a structured combination of keywords across five conceptual domains: population, context, setting, collaboration, and outcome. Boolean operators (AND, OR) were applied to ensure comprehensive retrieval of relevant studies across multiple databases (see Table 1).

Table 1. Systematic Literature Review Search Strategy (2015–2025)

No.	Database	Coverage Years	Search String (Boolean Keywords)	Filters Applied
1	Scopus	2015–2025	("ADHD" OR "attention deficit hyperactivity disorder") AND ("early childhood" OR "preschool") AND ("inclusive education") AND ("teacher–parent collaboration" OR "school–family partnership" OR "parental involvement") AND ("attention" OR "focus" OR "concentration")	Article type: journal; Language: English; Subject area: Education, Psychology
2	Web of Science	2015–2025	("ADHD" OR "attention deficit hyperactivity disorder") AND ("early childhood" OR "preschool") AND ("inclusive education") AND ("teacher–parent collaboration" OR "family–school partnership") AND ("attention" OR "focus")	Document type: article; Index: SSCI/SCI; Language: English
3	ERIC	2015–2025	("ADHD" AND "preschool" AND "inclusive education") AND ("parent involvement" OR "family engagement") AND ("attention" OR "learning focus")	Peer-reviewed only; Education level: early childhood
4	ScienceDirect	2015–2025	("attention deficit hyperactivity disorder") AND ("early childhood education") AND ("inclusive classroom") AND ("parent–teacher collaboration")	Research articles; Open access preferred
5	DOAJ	2015–2025	("ADHD" AND "early childhood") AND ("inclusive education") AND ("parental involvement") AND ("attention")	Open access journals; Peer-reviewed

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance, rigor, and consistency of the systematic literature review, a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria was established prior to the study selection process. These criteria were designed to identify high-quality empirical studies that specifically address teacher–parent collaboration in inclusive early childhood education contexts, particularly for children with ADHD. The criteria also aimed to exclude studies that fall outside the scope of the research focus or lack methodological rigor. Table 2 presents the detailed inclusion and exclusion criteria applied in this review.

Table 2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria Category	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Type of Publication	Peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in Scopus or equivalent reputable databases	Non-empirical publications (e.g., opinion papers, editorials, commentaries)
Year of Publication	Published between 2015 and 2025	Published before 2015
Language	Articles published in English	Articles not available in English
Population	Studies involving children aged 3–8 years diagnosed with ADHD	Studies involving adolescents, adults, or non-ADHD populations
Research Focus	Studies addressing teacher–parent collaboration, inclusive education, or attention-related outcomes	Studies focusing solely on clinical or medical treatment without educational context
Research Design	Empirical studies (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods)	Non-empirical or theoretical-only studies without data

Data Extraction and Synthesis

Following the study selection process based on the PRISMA framework, data from the included studies were systematically extracted and synthesized to ensure consistency, transparency, and analytical rigor. A structured coding framework was developed to capture key dimensions of each study, including study characteristics, methodological design, forms of teacher–parent collaboration, and attention-related outcomes. This framework enabled cross-study comparison and supported the identification of recurring patterns and relationships. The extracted data were then analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, allowing findings across studies to be organized into meaningful conceptual themes. This approach facilitates a deeper understanding of how teacher–parent collaboration operates as a mechanism to support attention regulation in children with ADHD (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Qualitative Case Study Phase

Research Context and Participants

The qualitative phase of this study employed a case study design to explore in depth how teacher–parent collaboration is enacted within an inclusive early childhood education setting, particularly in supporting attention regulation among children with ADHD. Case study methodology is widely recognized as an appropriate approach for investigating complex, context-bound phenomena within real-life environments, where the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2018). In the context of inclusive education, collaboration between teachers and parents is inherently relational, dynamic, and influenced by multiple contextual factors such as school culture, parental beliefs, and institutional policies. Therefore, a case study approach enables a holistic and nuanced understanding of these interactions.

The study was conducted at TKIT Darul Abidin, an inclusive early childhood education institution that accommodates children with diverse developmental needs, including ADHD. The focus of the case study was on children aged 5 years (kindergarten level), as this developmental stage is critical for the emergence of executive functions, including attention regulation, self-control, and learning readiness. This setting was purposively selected because it represents a naturalistic and practice-rich environment in which teacher–parent collaboration is actively implemented as part of inclusive educational practices.

Participants consisted of early childhood teachers and parents of children diagnosed

with ADHD within the 5-year-old age group, as they are the primary actors directly involved in collaborative processes supporting children's learning and behavior. In addition, school administrators were included as optional participants to provide insights into institutional policies, support systems, and school-level strategies that facilitate or constrain collaboration practices.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a strategy commonly used in qualitative research to identify information-rich cases that can provide deep insights into the phenomenon under study (Palinkas et al., 2015). Inclusion criteria required participants to have direct and sustained involvement in inclusive education practices at TKIT Darul Abidin, as well as active engagement in teacher–parent collaboration processes. This approach ensured that the data collected were contextually grounded, experience-based, and aligned with the research objectives, particularly in understanding how collaboration practices influence attention regulation among children with ADHD in early childhood settings.

Data Collection

Data were collected using multiple qualitative methods to capture the complexity of teacher–parent collaboration practices and to enhance the depth, richness, and validity of the findings. The study employed a combination of semi-structured interviews, classroom and interaction observations, and document analysis to obtain comprehensive and triangulated data from different sources. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both early childhood teachers and parents of children with ADHD as the primary data collection method. This approach was selected because it provides sufficient flexibility to explore participants' lived experiences, perceptions, and challenges, while still maintaining a consistent structure across interviews (Flick, 2022). The interview protocols were carefully developed to explore key aspects of collaboration, including communication patterns between teachers and parents, strategies used to support children's attention and behavior, perceived challenges in implementing collaborative practices, and the overall impact of these interactions on children's learning engagement and attention regulation.

In addition to interviews, classroom and interaction observations were carried out to capture real-time practices of collaboration and teaching strategies within the inclusive learning environment. These observations enabled the researcher to examine how collaborative efforts are translated into daily classroom routines, particularly in managing attention-related behaviors and supporting children's participation in learning activities. Observational data also provided contextual evidence that complemented participants' verbal accounts. Document analysis was conducted to further enrich the data and provide formal evidence of collaboration practices. Relevant documents included individualized learning plans (ILPs), communication records between teachers and parents, and school reports related to children's development.

These documents offered insights into how collaboration is structured, documented, and sustained over time, thereby strengthening the overall credibility and completeness of the data. Through the integration of these multiple data collection methods, the study ensured methodological triangulation, allowing for a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of teacher–parent collaboration in supporting attention regulation among children with ADHD in inclusive early childhood education settings.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2021): (1) familiarization with the data, (2) initial

coding, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report. This approach allows for a systematic and flexible analysis of qualitative data, enabling the identification of patterns and meanings across participants' experiences.

Thematic analysis was particularly suitable for this study as it facilitates the exploration of both explicit and implicit dimensions of teacher–parent collaboration, including communication dynamics, emotional interactions, and contextual constraints. Through iterative coding and theme development, the analysis generated key themes related to collaboration practices, attention support strategies, and influencing factors within inclusive educational settings.

To enhance the trustworthiness and rigor of the qualitative findings, several strategies were employed. First, triangulation was applied by integrating multiple data sources (interviews, observations, and documents) to validate emerging findings (Nowell et al., 2017). Second, member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with participants to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings. Third, an audit trail was maintained to document the research process, including decisions made during data collection and analysis, thereby ensuring transparency and replicability.

Integration of SLR and Case Study Findings

The findings from the SLR and qualitative case study were integrated at the interpretation stage using a convergent narrative approach. In this approach, results from both phases are compared, contrasted, and synthesized to generate a comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The SLR provides generalizable evidence on patterns, mechanisms, and outcomes of teacher–parent collaboration, while the qualitative case study offers contextualized insights into how these patterns are enacted in real-world settings.

This integrative strategy enhances the explanatory power of the study by linking theoretical and empirical evidence. It allows the researcher to identify consistencies between global research findings and local practices, as well as to highlight contextual variations that may influence the effectiveness of collaboration. Ultimately, this approach contributes to a more holistic understanding of teacher–parent collaboration as a relational, ecological, and context-sensitive process in inclusive early childhood education.

FINDINGS

Findings of Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

The findings of the systematic literature review reveal that the existing literature on teacher–parent collaboration in inclusive early childhood education for children with ADHD remains conceptually fragmented. While some studies directly address collaborative practices, many contribute indirectly by examining intervention strategies, family engagement, or attention-related outcomes. To address this fragmentation, the present analysis synthesizes both direct and supporting evidence, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of collaboration as an ecological mechanism influencing attention regulation. Table 3 provides a structured overview of the included studies, illustrating how different strands of research collectively inform the role of teacher–parent collaboration in supporting attention among young children with ADHD.

Table 3. Data Extraction of Included Studies

Author(s) & Year	Focus Relevant to This Review	Attention-Related Outcomes	Key Findings / Contribution
Shen et al. (2021)	Parent–teacher training for children with ADHD	ADHD symptoms, academic performance, parental anxiety	Parent–teacher training improved ADHD symptoms, academic performance, and reduced parental anxiety, supporting home–school collaboration as an intervention pathway. (Frontiers)
Hosseinnia et al. (2024)	Educational intervention for parents and teachers of children with ADHD	Reduction of ADHD symptoms	Parent–teacher educational intervention improved children's ADHD symptoms, indicating the importance of coordinated adult support. (PMC)
Mautone et al. (2015)	Quality of parent–teacher relationships for students with ADHD	Indirect support for behavioral and academic functioning	Highlights parent–teacher relationship quality as a measurable and important dimension in ADHD-related school support. DOI: 10.1002/pits.21817. (PubMed)
Smith et al. (2020)	Family–school partnership interventions	Academic and social-emotional functioning	Family–school partnerships positively affect children's academic and social-emotional outcomes; relevant as a collaboration framework. (JSTOR)
Sheridan et al. (2019)	Family–school interventions	Social-behavioral competence and mental health	Demonstrates broad effects of family–school interventions on behavioral and mental-health outcomes, supporting collaboration as an ecological mechanism. (Sage Journals)
Valero et al. (2022)	Mindfulness training for children with ADHD and parents	ADHD symptoms, executive function, family functioning	Mindfulness-based parent–child intervention improved ADHD symptoms and related executive-function/family outcomes. (Sage Journals)
Chan et al. (2024)	Parent–teacher discrepancy in hyperactivity/inattention screening	Hyperactivity/inattention ratings	Parent–teacher reporting discrepancies are influenced by child, parent, and family characteristics; supports the need for shared assessment. (PLOS)
Landis et al. (2021)	ADHD symptoms, emotion regulation, executive function	Preschool attention and self-regulation	Shows that preschool ADHD symptoms are linked to emotion regulation and executive function, strengthening the attention-regulation rationale.
Pyle & Fabiano (2017)	Daily report card as school-based intervention for ADHD	Classroom attention, behavior, school functioning	Daily report cards are commonly used school-based ADHD interventions and often require home–school communication. DOI: 10.1177/0014402917706370. (Sage Journals)
Moore et al. (2016)	Daily report cards as school-based intervention for ADHD	ADHD symptoms and school outcomes	Daily report cards support ADHD symptom management and school outcomes, providing a practical collaboration tool between teachers and families. DOI: 10.1111/1467-9604.12115. (Nasen Journals)
Yegencik et al. (2025)	School-based interventions for ADHD	Inattention, academic performance, social skills, externalizing problems	School-based interventions improve key ADHD-related impairments; findings support school as a major intervention context. (Frontiers)

Faraone et al. (2024)	ADHD as neurodevelopmental condition	Attention, impulsivity, executive function	Provides current high-level evidence on ADHD characteristics and the need for multimodal support. Note: a correction/alternate DOI appears in databases, so use the publisher-verified DOI carefully. (PubMed)
Lee et al. (2025)	Early attention and executive delays	Attention and executive function in early childhood	Confirms that attention and executive-function delays are detectable in the first five years, supporting early intervention. (Nature)
Chen et al. (2025)	Parental challenges in raising preschoolers with ADHD	Indirect attention support through parenting stress and support systems	Identifies multilayered parental challenges, showing why parent emotional support is essential for effective collaboration. (JMIR Formative Research)
Gollier-Briant et al. (2024)	Homework support and family functioning	Homework performance and family quality of life	Indicates emerging digital approaches to family-based academic support for children with ADHD, relevant for home–school continuity. (JMIR Research Protocols)

The findings suggest that teacher–parent collaboration functions as a multi-dimensional and ecological mechanism influencing attention regulation in children with ADHD. While direct evidence confirms the effectiveness of collaborative interventions, the broader literature indicates that attention outcomes are shaped by the interaction of relational, emotional, and contextual factors. This highlights the need for integrative approaches that bridge collaboration practices with attention regulation within inclusive early childhood education settings.

Findings of Qualitative Study Cases

From Administrative Communication to Educational Partnership

A key finding of this study is that teacher–parent collaboration extends beyond administrative communication and evolves into a meaningful educational partnership. While initial interactions between teachers and parents often focus on reporting children's progress or behavioral concerns, effective collaboration emerges when communication becomes dialogic, reciprocal, and solution-oriented.

The data show that communication practices at TKIT Darul Abidin function not only as information exchange but also as a mechanism for shared meaning-making. Teachers and parents who engage in ongoing dialogue develop a more aligned understanding of children's needs, particularly in relation to attention difficulties. This shift from transactional communication to relational partnership enables both parties to co-construct strategies that address cognitive, emotional, and social aspects of learning. However, the findings also highlight that communication alone is insufficient when it remains superficial or one-directional. Effective collaboration requires depth, consistency, and mutual trust, suggesting that communication must be embedded within a broader partnership framework rather than treated as a standalone activity.

Joint Assessment and Planning as a Mechanism for Personalization

The second major finding emphasizes the role of parental involvement in assessment and learning planning, conceptualized as a *joint assessment and planning model*. This form of collaboration allows teachers to gain deeper insight into children's behavioral patterns at home, which are often not fully visible in classroom settings. The integration of home-based

information into classroom planning enables teachers to design more personalized and context-sensitive learning strategies, particularly for managing attention-related challenges. For example, understanding children's routines, triggers, and coping strategies at home helps teachers adjust instructional approaches, behavioral reinforcement systems, and classroom expectations. This finding suggests that attention regulation in children with ADHD is not solely influenced by in-school interventions but is significantly shaped by cross-contextual understanding. Therefore, joint assessment and planning function as a critical bridge between home and school, ensuring that intervention strategies are coherent, adaptive, and responsive to the child's lived experience.

Behavioral and Emotional Support: The Role of Parenting Interventions

Another important dimension of collaboration identified in this study is behavioral and emotional support, particularly through parenting interventions. The findings show that parental participation in behavior management training, especially the involvement of fathers, contributes to a reduction in parenting stress and improvements in children's behavior at home. This highlights a crucial but often overlooked aspect of collaboration: the role of family dynamics and parental well-being in shaping children's attention. When parents are equipped with appropriate strategies and supported emotionally, they are better able to provide consistent guidance, structure, and reinforcement at home. The inclusion of fathers in parenting interventions is particularly noteworthy, as it strengthens the overall consistency of caregiving practices. This finding suggests that effective collaboration should not be limited to mother–teacher interactions but should adopt a more inclusive family-oriented approach.

Consistency Across Home and School as a Determinant of Attention Regulation

The findings further demonstrate that children's attention is highly dependent on the consistency of learning environments across home and school. When behavioral expectations, routines, and reinforcement strategies are aligned, children show improved ability to sustain attention and engage in learning tasks. Conversely, inconsistencies between home and school, such as differing rules, expectations, or responses to behavior, lead to fragmented attention patterns and reduced learning engagement. This indicates that attention regulation is not merely an individual cognitive capacity but a context-dependent outcome shaped by environmental coherence. Thus, collaboration functions as a coordinating mechanism that synchronizes learning environments, enabling children to receive stable and predictable cues that support attention and self-regulation.

Emotional Climate and Mindful Parenting in Supporting Attention

The study also reveals that the emotional dimension of collaboration plays a significant role in shaping attention outcomes. Emotional support from teachers toward parents, combined with the implementation of mindful parenting practices, contributes to a more positive and less conflict-prone learning environment. Parents who experience reduced stress and increased emotional awareness are better able to respond calmly and consistently to their children's behavior. In turn, this creates a supportive environment that enhances children's ability to focus and regulate their attention. Similarly, teachers who demonstrate empathy and understanding toward parental challenges are more effective in building trust and sustaining collaboration. These findings suggest that collaboration is not only instructional but also affective in nature, where emotional regulation of adults (both teachers and parents) directly influences children's attention and behavior.

Environmental Alignment as an Ecological Foundation of Collaboration

Finally, the findings highlight the importance of environmental alignment across home and school contexts. A supportive social environment, characterized by stable routines, consistent expectations, and positive interactions, contributes to children's emotional stability, which in turn strengthens attention regulation. This indicates that collaboration extends beyond interpersonal

relationships to include the alignment of broader learning environments. Effective collaboration, therefore, operates at multiple levels: relational (teacher–parent interaction), instructional (learning strategies), emotional (parental well-being), and environmental (home–school consistency).

Synthesis of Case Study Findings

Taken together, the findings suggest that teacher–parent collaboration in inclusive early childhood education functions as a multi-dimensional and ecological system. The effectiveness of collaboration depends not only on the presence of communication but also on the integration of shared planning, emotional support, and environmental consistency. Rather than being a supplementary component, collaboration emerges as a central mechanism through which attention regulation is supported. This perspective shifts the focus from individual deficits in children with ADHD toward a more holistic understanding of how learning environments can be structured and aligned to support sustained attention and engagement.

Table 4 synthesizes the findings of the qualitative case study by organizing them into key themes, underlying mechanisms, and their implications for attention regulation. This analytical presentation demonstrates how teacher–parent collaboration operates as an interconnected system that shapes children's learning engagement across home and school contexts.

Table 4. Summary of Case Study Findings on Teacher–Parent Collaboration

No.	Key Theme	Description of Findings	Mechanism of Influence on Attention	Key Insight
1	**Communication-Based Partnership**	Collaboration begins with communication that evolves from administrative reporting to dialogic and reflective interaction between teachers and parents	Aligns expectations, improves consistency of behavioral guidance across home and school	Effective collaboration requires relational communication, not just information exchange
2	**Joint Assessment and Planning**	Parents are actively involved in assessing children's behavior and planning individualized learning strategies	Enables teachers to understand home context and personalize classroom interventions	Cross-context understanding enhances the effectiveness of attention support strategies
3	**Behavioral and Emotional Support Collaboration**	Parents participate in behavioral training and parenting programs; father involvement strengthens caregiving consistency	Reduces parenting stress and improves behavioral reinforcement at home	Family engagement, including fathers, is critical for sustainable collaboration
4	**Consistency Across Learning Environments**	Alignment of routines, rules, and reinforcement strategies between home and school	Provides stable cues that support sustained attention and task engagement	Attention regulation is shaped by environmental coherence, not only individual ability
5	**Emotional Support and Mindful Parenting**	Teachers provide empathetic support to parents; parents develop emotional regulation through mindful parenting practices	Reduces conflict and promotes calm, responsive parenting that supports children's focus	Adult emotional regulation directly influences children's attention and behavior
6	**Environmental**	Collaboration extends to	Creates	Effective

	and Contextual Alignment	managing broader learning environments (e.g., routines, social interactions, learning structure)	emotionally stable and structured environments that strengthen attention regulation	collaboration operates at relational, instructional, emotional, and environmental levels
7	**Collaboration as an Ecological System**	All forms of collaboration interact dynamically rather than functioning independently	Integrates multiple support systems to sustain attention across contexts	Collaboration is a central mechanism, not a supplementary strategy in inclusive education

Taken together, the findings summarized in Table 4 indicate that teacher–parent collaboration in inclusive early childhood education operates as a multi-dimensional and interdependent system rather than a set of isolated practices, where each theme, ranging from communication-based partnership to environmental alignment, contributes uniquely to supporting children's attention yet derives its effectiveness from the way these elements interact and reinforce one another across contexts. The synthesis further demonstrates that attention regulation in children with ADHD is not solely determined by individual cognitive capacity but is significantly shaped by the alignment of relational, instructional, emotional, and environmental factors, with communication functioning as the entry point that must evolve into shared assessment, coordinated intervention, and emotionally supportive engagement to produce meaningful outcomes.

In this sense, collaboration serves as a mechanism for synchronizing home and school environments, ensuring consistency in expectations, routines, and behavioral reinforcement. Moreover, the findings underscore the critical role of adult regulation and contextual coherence, showing that when teachers and parents are emotionally supported, share a common understanding of the child, and implement consistent strategies, children are more likely to develop stable attention and sustained learning engagement, whereas fragmentation across these dimensions may weaken intervention effectiveness. Overall, this synthesis reinforces the view that teacher–parent collaboration should be positioned as a central mechanism within inclusive education, functioning as an ecological system that integrates multiple layers of support and shifts the focus from isolated interventions toward a more holistic approach, in which attention regulation emerges from the coordinated interaction of individuals, relationships, and learning environments.

Integrated Findings: SLR and Case Study

Overview of Integration

The integration of findings from the systematic literature review (SLR) and the qualitative case study reveals a convergent pattern: teacher–parent collaboration operates as a multi-layered, ecological mechanism that supports attention regulation in children with ADHD within inclusive early childhood education settings. While the SLR provides generalizable evidence on the effectiveness and forms of collaboration, the case study at TKIT Darul Abidin offers contextualized insights into how these mechanisms are enacted in practice. The integration thus moves beyond aggregation to explain how and why collaboration influences attention outcomes.

The integrated findings reveal that teacher–parent collaboration in inclusive early childhood education for children with ADHD converges into three core forms: communication-

based partnership, joint assessment and planning, and behavioral–emotional support. These forms, identified in the SLR and observed in the case study, demonstrate that collaboration is effective only when communication evolves into a reciprocal, dialogic process that enables shared decision-making and coordinated action. The findings further clarify that collaboration influences attention through key mechanisms, including alignment of routines across home and school, shared understanding of the child, regulation of adult emotions, and structured behavioral support. Together, these mechanisms indicate that attention regulation is a co-constructed outcome shaped by coordinated environments and adult interactions rather than an individual cognitive capacity.

Moreover, the integration highlights the complementarity between SLR and case study findings, where the SLR explains what works at a general level, while the case study illustrates how these practices operate in context. This combined perspective supports the conceptualization of collaboration as an ecological system functioning across relational, instructional, emotional, and environmental levels. However, the analysis also identifies gaps in the literature, particularly the limited integration of collaboration, ADHD, early childhood, and attention outcomes within a single framework, as well as the lack of contextual detail in large-scale studies. Overall, the findings reinforce that teacher–parent collaboration is a central mechanism in inclusive education, requiring alignment across multiple dimensions to effectively support children's attention and learning engagement.

Table 5 presents an integrated summary of the findings derived from both the systematic literature review (SLR) and the qualitative case study. The table synthesizes key aspects of teacher–parent collaboration, highlighting core forms, underlying mechanisms, and their implications for attention regulation in children with ADHD within inclusive early childhood education contexts. By organizing the findings into analytical dimensions, the table provides a concise yet comprehensive overview of how collaboration operates across multiple levels. This synthesis not only distinguishes between generalizable evidence from the SLR and context-specific insights from the case study, but also demonstrates their complementarity in explaining both what works and how it works in practice. Furthermore, the table identifies critical research gaps and reinforces the conceptualization of collaboration as an ecological system, offering a structured foundation for understanding its role as a central mechanism in supporting children's attention and learning engagement.

Table 5. Integrated Summary of SLR and Case Study Findings

Aspect	Key Points	Implication
Core Forms of Collaboration	Communication, joint assessment & planning, behavioral–emotional support	Collaboration must be multi-dimensional, not single-strategy
Mechanisms of Impact	Alignment, shared understanding, adult emotional regulation, structured support	Attention is shaped by coordinated systems
SLR–Case Study Integration	SLR = what works; Case Study = how it works	Strengthens validity and explanatory depth
Ecological Perspective	Collaboration operates across relational, instructional, emotional, and environmental levels	Positions collaboration as a system, not an intervention
Research Gaps	Limited integration of ADHD, collaboration, early childhood, and attention; lack of contextual detail	Need for multi-method and integrative research
Overall Conclusion	Collaboration is a central mechanism supporting attention regulation	Requires alignment across home–school contexts

Figure 1 presents an integrated model synthesizing findings from the systematic literature review (SLR) and the qualitative case study conducted at TKIT Darul Abidin. The figure illustrates how teacher–parent collaboration operates as a multi-dimensional system that connects evidence from prior research with context-specific practices in inclusive early childhood education. Rather than depicting collaboration as a single intervention, the model conceptualizes it as an interconnected set of mechanisms linking home and school environments to support attention regulation in children with ADHD.

Specifically, the model is organized into four main components: (1) evidence from the SLR, which provides generalizable patterns of collaboration and intervention effectiveness; (2) evidence from the case study, which reflects how collaboration is enacted in real-world settings; (3) integrated mechanisms that explain how collaboration influences attention outcomes; and (4) attention-related outcomes observed in children. In addition, the model incorporates contextual factors as moderating variables that shape the effectiveness of collaboration across different environments.

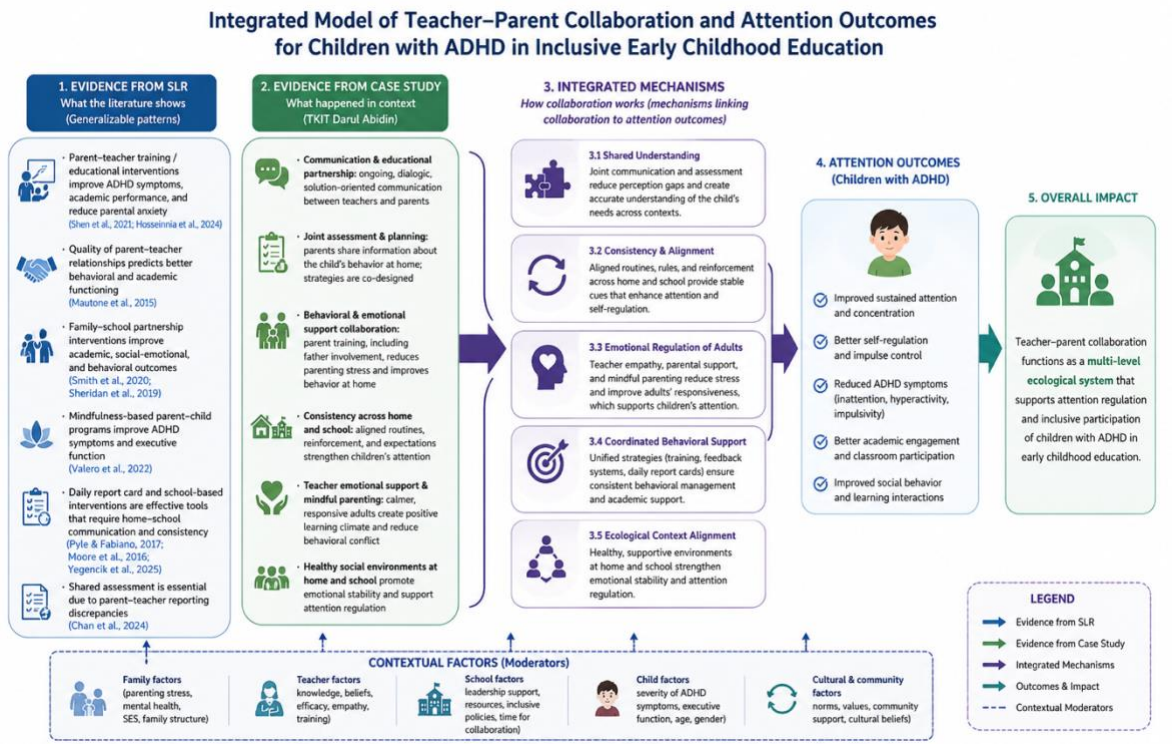

Figure 1. Integrated Model of Teacher–Parent Collaboration and Attention Outcomes for Children with ADHD in Inclusive Early Childhood Education

Figure 1 demonstrates that teacher–parent collaboration should be understood not merely as a set of practices, but as an ecological system of interaction that operates across multiple levels. The integration of SLR and case study findings reveals several critical insights. First, the model shows a clear convergence between global evidence and local practice. Findings from the SLR, such as parent–teacher training, family–school partnerships, and behavioral interventions, are reflected in the case study through concrete practices including communication partnerships, joint assessment and planning, and behavioral support strategies. This convergence strengthens the validity of the findings by demonstrating that what works in the literature is also observable in authentic educational contexts.

Second, the model highlights the mechanisms through which collaboration influences

attention regulation. These mechanisms include shared understanding between teachers and parents, alignment of routines and expectations across home and school, emotional regulation of adults, and coordinated behavioral support. Together, these mechanisms explain how collaboration translates into improved attention outcomes, shifting the perspective from "what collaboration is" to "how collaboration works."

Third, the figure emphasizes that attention regulation in children with ADHD is not an isolated cognitive process but a context-dependent outcome shaped by environmental coherence and relational dynamics. The presence of aligned routines, consistent behavioral reinforcement, and emotionally supportive interactions across contexts creates stable conditions that enable children to sustain attention and engage in learning. Fourth, the inclusion of contextual factors, such as family conditions, teacher competence, school support, and socio-cultural influences, demonstrates that the effectiveness of collaboration is not universal but contingent upon surrounding conditions. This reinforces the argument that collaboration must be understood within a broader ecological framework rather than as a standalone strategy.

Disscussion

This study set out to integrate evidence from a systematic literature review (SLR) and a qualitative case study to explain how teacher–parent collaboration supports attention regulation in children with ADHD within inclusive early childhood education. Building on the synthesis in Table X, the discussion advances a central argument: collaboration is not an ancillary support but a multi-dimensional, ecological mechanism that organizes learning environments across home and school to sustain children's attention and engagement (Kim & Sheridan, 2021; Sheridan et al., 2022).

First, the convergence on three core forms of collaboration—communication-based partnership, joint assessment and planning, and behavioral–emotional support—extends prior work on family–school partnerships by specifying what "effective collaboration" looks like in ADHD contexts. The literature has long emphasized communication and parental involvement as key predictors of student outcomes (Barger et al., 2019; Jeynes, 2020); however, our integrated findings show that communication must evolve from administrative exchange to dialogic, co-constructive partnership. When communication enables shared decision-making and continuous feedback loops, it becomes the entry point to more substantive practices such as co-assessment and co-planning (Garbacz et al., 2020). This aligns with partnership models in education, yet our results sharpen the mechanism: the value of communication lies in its capacity to generate shared understanding and coordinated action, not merely information flow.

Second, the analysis clarifies how collaboration influences attention by identifying four interlocking mechanisms: (a) alignment of routines and expectations across home and school, (b) shared understanding of the child through cross-context insight, (c) regulation of adult emotions and responses, and (d) structured behavioral support. Together, these mechanisms demonstrate that attention is co-constructed rather than solely an individual cognitive trait. Consistent routines and reinforcement across settings provide stable cues for self-regulation (McClelland et al., 2020); joint assessment reduces perception gaps between teachers and parents, enabling personalized strategies; adult emotional regulation, supported by teacher empathy and mindful parenting, reduces reactivity and increases responsiveness (Haine-Schlagel & Walsh, 2021; Valero et al., 2022); and structured supports (e.g., coordinated

behavior plans, feedback systems) translate collaboration into daily practice (Power et al., 2020; Pelham & Fabiano, 2020). This mechanism-based explanation moves the field beyond documenting "effects" toward explaining causal pathways linking collaboration to attention outcomes.

Third, the complementary strengths of the SLR and the case study address a persistent limitation in the literature. The SLR establishes what works (e.g., parent–teacher training, family–school interventions), while the case study reveals how it works in context (e.g., daily communication routines, co-designed strategies, adaptive responses). By integrating these strands, the study enhances both explanatory depth and transferability. In practical terms, interventions validated in the literature gain feasibility when translated into context-sensitive routines, while locally grounded practices gain credibility when aligned with broader evidence (McWayne et al., 2022). This dual validation is particularly important in inclusive early childhood settings, where variability in children's profiles and family contexts demands adaptable, evidence-informed practice.

Fourth, the findings support a shift toward an ecological conceptualization of collaboration. Effective collaboration operates simultaneously across relational (trust, communication), instructional (aligned strategies and routines), emotional (adult well-being and empathy), and environmental (home–school coherence) levels. Rather than functioning as a discrete program, collaboration becomes an organizing system that synchronizes these levels. This perspective resonates with ecological models of development and extends them by specifying collaboration as the coordinating mechanism that aligns microsystems (home and school) to stabilize attention and participation for children with ADHD (Williford et al., 2021; Graziano et al., 2020).

At the same time, the study identifies important gaps and boundary conditions. The SLR reveals a scarcity of studies that explicitly integrate all four domains, collaboration, ADHD, early childhood, and attention outcomes, within a single design. Much of the existing work isolates intervention effectiveness from family processes or treats family engagement without linking it to attention-specific outcomes. Moreover, large-scale studies often underreport contextual variables (e.g., cultural norms, school policies), which are shown here to moderate effectiveness. The case study partially addresses these gaps by providing context-rich, mechanism-oriented evidence, yet it also underscores the need for multi-method and mixed-method designs that can test mechanisms while preserving contextual fidelity. These insights yield several implications for practice. Schools should prioritize structures that enable ongoing, dialogic communication, institutionalize joint assessment and planning, and provide parent-focused supports alongside teacher professional development in empathetic communication and behavior support. Importantly, interventions should be designed to ensure home–school coherence—aligning routines, expectations, and reinforcement systems—to create stable cues that scaffold attention (Murray et al., 2021).

The study also has limitations. The SLR, while systematic, reflects variability in study designs and measures of attention, which may affect comparability. The case study is context-specific (TKIT Darul Abidin, age group 5), limiting generalization; however, its purpose is analytic generalization through mechanism elucidation. Integration occurred primarily at the interpretation stage; future work could strengthen integration through embedded or longitudinal mixed-method designs that test identified mechanisms over time. In conclusion, this study advances the field by articulating a mechanism-based, ecological model of teacher–parent collaboration. It reframes attention regulation in children with ADHD as an outcome of

coordinated relational, instructional, emotional, and environmental processes across home and school. By moving beyond fragmented evidence toward an integrated explanation of how collaboration works, the study provides a robust foundation for designing and implementing inclusive practices that sustain attention and learning engagement in early childhood.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that teacher–parent collaboration plays a central and transformative role in supporting attention regulation among children with ADHD in inclusive early childhood education. By integrating findings from a systematic literature review and a qualitative case study, the study demonstrates that collaboration should not be understood as a supplementary component but as a core ecological mechanism that connects home and school environments. Effective collaboration is characterized by the integration of communication, joint assessment and planning, behavioral–emotional support, and environmental alignment. The findings further highlight that attention regulation is a co-constructed outcome shaped by coordinated relational, instructional, emotional, and contextual processes. When teachers and parents share a common understanding of the child, implement consistent strategies, and maintain supportive emotional interactions, children are more likely to develop stable attention and sustained engagement in learning. Conversely, fragmentation across these dimensions may reduce the effectiveness of interventions. This study advances the field by proposing an integrative and ecological model of teacher–parent collaboration that bridges theoretical evidence and real-world practice. The model provides a conceptual and practical framework for designing more responsive, consistent, and sustainable inclusive educational practices, particularly for children with ADHD in early childhood settings.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the systematic literature review, although conducted rigorously, includes studies with varying research designs, contexts, and measurement approaches, which may limit comparability across findings. Second, the qualitative case study was conducted in a single inclusive early childhood education setting (TKIT Darul Abidin) focusing on children aged five years, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other contexts, age groups, or educational systems. However, the purpose of the case study was to provide contextual depth and analytic generalization rather than statistical generalization.

Third, the integration of SLR and qualitative findings was conducted primarily at the interpretation stage, which may limit the extent to which both data sources are fully integrated at the methodological level. Future studies could adopt more advanced mixed-method designs, such as embedded or longitudinal approaches, to examine causal mechanisms more rigorously over time.

Further research is recommended to explore teacher–parent collaboration across diverse cultural, institutional, and socio-economic contexts to enhance the transferability of findings. Additionally, future studies should investigate the long-term impact of collaboration on children's attention, executive function, and academic outcomes using longitudinal and intervention-based designs. Expanding research to include digital collaboration tools and hybrid learning environments may also provide new insights into how collaboration can be strengthened in evolving educational contexts.

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