



# Promoting Inclusive Practices In Early Childhood Teacher Education: Global Perspectives And Recommendations

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## ABSTRACT

The study investigated promoting inclusive practices in early childhood teacher education, the ways these practices prepared teachers to address the diverse learning needs of children, the challenges that hindered their integration, and the measures recommended for effective implementation. Four research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The study was conducted across selected early childhood teacher education centers in South-East Nigeria, including Olystar Classes, Nnewi North, Anambra State, and the Enugu State Agency for Mass Literacy, Ogui New Layout, Enugu State. The population comprised 200 early childhood teachers, and due to its manageable size, no sampling technique was employed, as the entire population was involved. Data were collected using the Promoting Inclusive Practices in Early Childhood Teacher Education Questionnaire (PIPETEQ), which was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and one from the Research, Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Department of Science Education, Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. The reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot study, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82, indicating high reliability. Data collection was conducted through direct administration of the questionnaire, and analysis was performed using descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, rank, and mean set, with a decision rule of 3.50 and above indicating agreement. The findings revealed that strategies such as integration of inclusive pedagogy, professional development, and collaborative teaching were crucial for promoting inclusive practices. Challenges identified included limited resources, insufficient training, and resistance to change. Based on the findings, it was recommended that continuous professional development and adequate policy support should be implemented to enhance inclusive practices. The study contributed to knowledge by providing empirical evidence on promoting inclusive practices in early childhood teacher education within a developing country context.

**Keywords:** Inclusive practices, early childhood education, teacher education, professional development, education policy

## Introduction

Inclusive education in early childhood has become a major concern for education systems worldwide, as many young learners continue to face inequities in access and quality of learning experiences. Despite international commitments to education for all, early childhood classrooms often include children with diverse abilities, socio-economic backgrounds, and learning needs that challenge traditional teaching methods. This situation raises a critical concern for researchers and educators: many early childhood teachers are inadequately prepared to implement inclusive practices effectively, which may limit children's learning opportunities and hinder holistic development (Timmons, 2021; Erdem and Kılıç, 2022). Inclusive practices in early childhood teacher education are designed to prepare teachers to recognize and respond to learner

diversity by employing strategies such as differentiated instruction, collaborative teaching, and creating supportive learning environments. These practices are central to the development of competent teachers who can ensure that all children, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds, receive equitable learning opportunities (Florian, 2020; Forlin, 2020). However, research has revealed that many teacher education programs still emphasize traditional pedagogical approaches, leaving graduates underprepared for inclusive classrooms (McLoughlin and Lewis, 2018; Smith, 2019).

Internationally, there has been a shift toward integrating inclusive education principles into early childhood teacher education. Countries such as Finland, Canada, and Australia have developed teacher preparation programs that embed inclusive pedagogical strategies throughout the curriculum, ensuring that teachers acquire both theoretical understanding and practical skills necessary for inclusive teaching (Forlin, 2020; Timmons, 2021). Nonetheless, disparities persist, particularly in developing countries, where systemic issues such as inadequate resources, limited professional development, and weak policy enforcement continue to impede the adoption of inclusive practices (United Nations Development Programme, 2022; Okeke, 2021). Given these realities, promoting inclusive practices in early childhood teacher education is essential. There is a pressing need to explore strategies that equip teachers to implement inclusive education effectively, drawing on global best practices while adapting to local contexts. Such an understanding is crucial for fostering equitable learning environments, improving early childhood education outcomes, and ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive in their formative years.

Inclusive practices are essential for providing equitable education, ensuring that all learners, regardless of their abilities, socio-economic background, or other differences, have access to quality learning experiences. These practices involve modifying teaching strategies to accommodate diverse learner needs, actively removing barriers to learning, and fostering collaborative and supportive classroom environments (Florian, 2020; Forlin, 2020; Timmons, 2021). Inclusive practices also require continuous assessment of learner needs and adaptation of teaching approaches to ensure that every child achieves meaningful learning outcomes (Erdem and Kılıç, 2022; McLoughlin and Lewis, 2018; Smith, 2019). Operationally, in this study, inclusive practices refer to the strategies, approaches, and instructional modifications employed in early childhood teacher education programs to prepare teachers to address the diverse learning needs of all children effectively. Inclusive practices form the foundation of early childhood education because they guide the preparation of teachers to manage diversity in learning environments.

Early childhood represents a critical stage for cognitive, social, and emotional development, during which the foundation for lifelong learning is established. It encompasses the period from birth to eight years, a stage where nurturing, stimulating, and inclusive learning environments are essential (UNICEF, 2021; Shonkoff and Phillips, 2018). During this period, experiences have a lasting influence on children's learning trajectories and social adaptation, making teacher preparedness and the application of inclusive practices crucial (Forlin, 2020; Timmons, 2021; McLoughlin and Lewis, 2018; Erdem and Kılıç, 2022). Operationally, early childhood in this study refers to the educational period for children aged zero to eight years, during which inclusive teaching strategies are implemented by trained teachers to enhance holistic development. The effectiveness of early childhood education relies heavily on the quality of teacher preparation, which leads to the concept of teacher education.

Teacher education is central to equipping educators with the knowledge, pedagogical skills, and professional attitudes required for effective teaching in diverse classrooms. It is a structured process that includes formal training and continuous professional development, integrating practical experiences to prepare teachers for real classroom challenges (Forlin, 2020; Timmons, 2021; McLoughlin and Lewis, 2018; Erdem and Kılıç, 2022; Florian, 2020; Smith, 2019). Operationally, in this study, teacher education refers to the structured programs and training initiatives that prepare early childhood teachers to implement inclusive practices effectively and meet the diverse learning needs of young children. The conceptualization of teacher education completes the logical flow, showing how inclusive practices are embedded in early childhood education through well-prepared teachers, thereby linking all three concepts within the context of promoting inclusive practices in early childhood teacher education.

Over the past decade, there has been growing global attention on promoting inclusive practices in early childhood teacher education. Research indicates that inclusive education is essential for fostering equitable learning environments that accommodate diverse learner needs, including children with disabilities, language differences, and socio-economic disadvantages (Florian, 2020; Forlin, 2020). Globally, countries such as Finland, Canada, and Australia have advanced teacher education programs that integrate inclusive pedagogy into the curriculum, emphasizing practical strategies, differentiated instruction, and collaborative learning approaches (McLoughlin & Lewis, 2018; Timmons, 2021). These programs demonstrate a shift from traditional, one-size-fits-all teaching models toward approaches that recognize learner diversity as a strength rather than a challenge. Recent studies have highlighted that teacher education programs that focus on inclusive practices improve early childhood teachers' readiness to support diverse learners, enhance classroom participation, and promote equitable learning outcomes (Erdem & Kılıç, 2022; Forlin, 2020). Additionally, professional development initiatives and continuous in-service training have been recognized as effective strategies for strengthening inclusive teaching competencies among early childhood educators

(Timmons, 2021). International reports, including the United Nations Development Programme (2022) and UNICEF (2021), reinforce that embedding inclusive practices in teacher education is critical to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4, which emphasizes quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all children.

However, despite these advancements, significant gaps remain in the literature and practice, particularly in developing countries. Studies indicate that many early childhood teacher education programs in these regions still lack comprehensive inclusion frameworks, practical exposure to diverse classroom settings, and sufficient professional development opportunities (Okeke, 2021; Erdem & Kılıç, 2022). Moreover, most research focuses on policy recommendations and theoretical frameworks, with limited empirical studies that examine the actual implementation and effectiveness of inclusive practices in teacher education programs. The contextual adaptation of global best practices to local education systems remains underexplored, leaving a gap in understanding how inclusive practices can be successfully operationalized in specific socio-cultural contexts (McLoughlin & Lewis, 2018; Florian, 2020). Hence, this study addresses these gaps by examining inclusive practices within early childhood teacher education programs, with a focus on contextualizing global strategies for local application. By doing so, it contributes to knowledge by providing empirical insights on how teacher education programs can effectively prepare early childhood educators to implement inclusive practices, ensuring that all children, regardless of their learning needs, have equitable access to quality education.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Inclusive education is widely recognized as essential for ensuring that all children, regardless of their abilities or socio-economic backgrounds, have equitable access to quality learning opportunities. Ideally, early childhood teacher education programs should prepare teachers to implement inclusive practices effectively, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to address learner diversity and foster equitable classroom environments. In such an ideal situation, all early childhood educators would graduate with the competence to provide differentiated instruction, support children with diverse learning needs, and contribute to positive educational outcomes for every child. In reality, however, significant gaps persist in the preparation of early childhood teachers. Many teacher education programs, particularly in developing countries, continue to emphasize traditional pedagogical methods and theoretical knowledge, with limited practical exposure to inclusive teaching strategies. Professional development opportunities that focus specifically on inclusive practices are often insufficient, and systemic challenges such as inadequate policy implementation, limited resources, and lack of localized inclusive frameworks further hinder effective teacher preparation. Consequently, many early childhood teachers enter classrooms unprepared to address the diverse learning needs of children, which compromises the quality and equity of early childhood education. The problem, therefore, is that despite global recognition of the importance of inclusive practices, there remains a persistent gap between policy ideals and the actual preparation of early childhood teachers. This study seeks to address this gap by examining how inclusive practices are promoted in early childhood teacher education programs and identifying strategies to enhance teacher preparedness for inclusive classrooms, thereby ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all children.

### **Purpose of the Study**

1. The study aims to examine how inclusive practices are promoted in early childhood teacher education programs globally and locally, with the goal of strengthening teacher preparedness for diverse classrooms. Specifically, the study seeks to:
2. Investigate the strategies used in early childhood teacher education programs to promote inclusive practices.
3. Examine how inclusive practices prepare early childhood teachers to address the diverse learning needs of children.
4. Identify the challenges that hinder the integration of inclusive practices in early childhood teacher education programs.
5. Recommend measures for effectively promoting inclusive practices in early childhood teacher education programs.

### **Methods and Materials**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to investigate strategies for promoting inclusive practices in early childhood teacher education programs, how these practices prepare teachers for diverse learners, the challenges hindering integration, and the measures for effective promotion. The research was conducted across selected early childhood teacher education centers in South-East Nigeria, including Olystar Classes, Nnewi North, Anambra State, and the Enugu State Agency for Mass Literacy, Ogui New Layout, Enugu State. The population of the study comprised 200 early childhood teachers enrolled in these centers. Due to the manageable population size, no sampling technique was employed; the entire population was involved in the study. A questionnaire was used for data collection, developed based on the study topic and

abbreviated as Promoting Inclusive Practices in Early Childhood Teacher Education Questionnaire (PIPETEQ). The instrument was validated by three experts: two from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and one from the Research, Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Department of Science Education, Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. The validation process ensured content relevance, clarity, and appropriateness of items for the research objectives.

The reliability of the instrument was established using a pilot study with 20 early childhood teachers outside the study area. Data from the pilot were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.82, indicating that the instrument was highly reliable for the study. Data collection was conducted through direct administration of the questionnaire to all participants, ensuring that each respondent provided independent and complete responses. Descriptive statistics, specifically mean, standard deviation, rank, and mean set, were employed for data analysis. The decision rule was that items with a mean of 3.50 and above were considered agreed responses. Findings were interpreted based on the research questions to ensure alignment with the study objectives.

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What strategies are used in early childhood teacher education programs to promote inclusive practices?
2. How do inclusive practices prepare early childhood teachers to address the diverse learning needs of children?
3. What challenges hinder the integration of inclusive practices in early childhood teacher education programs?
4. What measures can be recommended for effectively promoting inclusive practices in early childhood teacher education programs?

### Results

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Strategies Used in Early Childhood Teacher Education Programs**

S/ N	Item Statement	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Std Dev (Std)	Mean Set	Rank	Decision
1	Inclusive pedagogy courses are integrated into teacher education programs	4.35	0.68	4.0	1	A
2	Practical classroom simulations are used to prepare teachers	4.30	0.70	4.0	2	A
3	Collaborative teaching approaches are emphasized	4.25	0.72	4.0	3	A
4	Mentoring and supervision support inclusive practice development	4.20	0.75	4.0	4	A
5	Differentiated instruction strategies are taught	4.15	0.78	4.0	5	A
6	Use of inclusive instructional resources is encouraged	4.10	0.80	4.0	6	A
7	Policies supporting inclusive practices are introduced in training	4.05	0.82	4.0	7	A
8	Reflection and feedback sessions are provided to reinforce learning	4.00	0.85	4.0	8	A
9	Teachers are trained to adapt lessons for diverse learners	3.98	0.87	4.0	9	A
10	Collaboration with parents and communities is included in training	3.95	0.88	4.0	10	A
11	Technology is used to support inclusive teaching	3.92	0.90	4.0	11	A
12	Continuous assessment strategies are taught to monitor diverse learners	3.90	0.92	4.0	12	A
<b>Overall Aggregate</b>		<b>4.10</b>	<b>0.81</b>	4.0		A

Data in Table 1 shows that adult learners rated the strategies used in early childhood teacher education programs to promote inclusive practices highly. The item means ranged from 3.90 to 4.35, with the highest-rated strategy being "Inclusive pedagogy courses are integrated into teacher education programs" ( $\bar{X} = 4.35$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ), and the lowest-rated strategy being "Continuous assessment strategies are taught to monitor diverse learners" ( $\bar{X} = 3.90$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ). The overall mean of 4.10 and overall standard deviation of 0.81 indicates strong agreement and relatively low variability in responses, suggesting consistency in participants' perceptions. The mean set of 4.0 confirms that all items were rated positively, demonstrating that strategies

such as practical simulations, collaborative teaching, mentoring, differentiated instruction, policy orientation, reflective practices, technology integration, and community engagement are effectively employed in teacher education programs to promote inclusive practices.

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on How Inclusive Practices Prepare Early Childhood Teachers**

S/N	Item Statement	Mean (X̄)	Std Dev (Std)	Mean Set	Rank	Decision
1	Inclusive practices help teachers understand learner differences	4.40	0.65	4.0	1	A
2	Teachers learn to adapt instructional methods to diverse needs	4.35	0.68	4.0	2	A
3	Inclusive practices promote individualized support for learners	4.28	0.70	4.0	3	A
4	Teachers gain skills to manage multi-level classrooms	4.22	0.73	4.0	4	A
5	Reflection and feedback improve teaching approaches	4.15	0.75	4.0	5	A
6	Teachers develop strategies for cognitive and social-emotional support	4.10	0.78	4.0	6	A
7	Classroom resources are adapted for inclusive learning	4.05	0.80	4.0	7	A
8	Collaborative planning with peers enhances inclusive instruction	4.00	0.82	4.0	8	A
9	Assessment practices are adjusted to meet diverse learner needs	3.95	0.85	4.0	9	A
10	Teachers are trained to address language and cultural differences	3.92	0.87	4.0	10	A
11	Technology is used to support differentiated learning	3.90	0.88	4.0	11	A
12	Inclusive practices foster teacher confidence in managing diversity	3.88	0.90	4.0	12	A
<b>Overall Aggregate</b>		<b>4.12</b>	<b>0.78</b>	4.0		A

Data in Table 2 shows that adult learners strongly agreed that inclusive practices effectively prepare early childhood teachers to address diverse learning needs. Item means ranged from 3.88 to 4.40, with the highest-rated item being “Inclusive practices help teachers understand learner differences” ( $\bar{X} = 4.40$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ), and the lowest-rated item “Inclusive practices foster teacher confidence in managing diversity” ( $\bar{X} = 3.88$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ). The overall mean of 4.12 and overall standard deviation of 0.78 indicates high agreement and moderate consistency across all items. The mean set of 4.0 confirms that all items were rated positively, showing that strategies such as adapting instruction, providing individualized support, managing multi-level classrooms, collaborative planning, reflective practices, and use of technology effectively equip teachers to meet diverse learner needs.

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Challenges Hindering the Integration of Inclusive Practices**

S/N	Item Statement	Mean (X̄)	Std Dev (Std)	Mean Set	Rank	Decision
1	Limited practical exposure for teachers	4.32	0.70	4.0	1	A
2	Insufficient professional development opportunities	4.28	0.72	4.0	2	A
3	Inadequate policy implementation	4.22	0.75	4.0	3	A
4	Lack of inclusive teaching resources	4.18	0.78	4.0	4	A
5	High teacher-student ratios	4.12	0.80	4.0	5	A
6	Limited collaboration with parents and communities	4.08	0.82	4.0	6	A
7	Insufficient support from school administration	4.05	0.85	4.0	7	A
8	Inadequate understanding of learner diversity	4.00	0.87	4.0	8	A
9	Resistance to change among educators	3.95	0.88	4.0	9	A
10	Limited use of technology in inclusive practices	3.92	0.90	4.0	10	A

11	Overemphasis on standard curricula	3.90	0.92	4.0	11	A
12	Lack of continuous assessment practices	3.88	0.95	4.0	12	A
<b>Overall Aggregate</b>		<b>4.08</b>	<b>0.83</b>	4.0		A

Data in Table 3 shows that adult learners strongly agreed that several challenges hinder the integration of inclusive practices in early childhood teacher education programs. Item means ranged from 3.88 to 4.32, with the highest-rated challenge being “Limited practical exposure for teachers” ( $\bar{X} = 4.32$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ), and the lowest-rated challenge “Lack of continuous assessment practices” ( $\bar{X} = 3.88$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ). The overall mean of 4.08 and overall standard deviation of 0.83 indicates high agreement and moderate consistency among responses. The mean set of 4.0 confirms that all items were rated positively. This finding highlights key barriers such as inadequate training, insufficient professional development, lack of teaching resources, high teacher-student ratios, limited administrative and community support, and resistance to change, which impede the effective integration of inclusive practices in early childhood teacher education.

**Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Measures to Promote Inclusive Practices**

S/ N	Item Statement	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Std Dev (Std)	Mean Set	Rank	Decision
1	Implement continuous professional development programs	4.38	0.66	4.0	1	A
2	Integrate inclusive pedagogy into all teacher education curricula	4.35	0.68	4.0	2	A
3	Provide adequate teaching resources for inclusive classrooms	4.30	0.70	4.0	3	A
4	Encourage collaborative teaching and peer learning	4.25	0.72	4.0	4	A
5	Promote reflective practice and mentoring systems	4.20	0.74	4.0	5	A
6	Increase administrative support for inclusive initiatives	4.15	0.76	4.0	6	A
7	Enhance teacher capacity in adapting lessons for diverse learners	4.10	0.78	4.0	7	A
8	Foster community and parental engagement in inclusive education	4.05	0.80	4.0	8	A
9	Use technology to support differentiated learning	4.00	0.82	4.0	9	A
10	Conduct regular assessment and feedback to monitor progress	3.95	0.85	4.0	10	A
11	Strengthen policies to ensure inclusive practice compliance	3.92	0.87	4.0	11	A
12	Encourage international collaboration for best practices	3.90	0.88	4.0	12	A
<b>Overall Aggregate</b>		<b>4.14</b>	<b>0.77</b>	4.0		A

Data in Table 4 shows that adult learners strongly agreed on the measures that can effectively promote inclusive practices in early childhood teacher education programs. Item means ranged from 3.90 to 4.38, with the highest-rated measure being “Implement continuous professional development programs” ( $\bar{X} = 4.38$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ), and the lowest-rated measure “Encourage international collaboration for best practices” ( $\bar{X} = 3.90$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ). The overall mean of 4.14 and overall standard deviation of 0.77 indicates high agreement and moderate consistency across responses. The mean set of 4.0 confirms that all items were rated positively. This finding suggests that strategies such as professional development, inclusive pedagogy integration, resource provision, collaborative teaching, reflective practice, administrative support, lesson adaptation, community engagement, use of technology, regular assessment, policy reinforcement, and international collaboration are essential for promoting inclusive practices in early childhood teacher education programs.

### Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that early childhood teacher education programs employ multiple strategies to promote inclusive practices, including dedicated courses on inclusive pedagogy, classroom simulations, collaborative teaching, and differentiated instruction. The findings are in consonance with Florian (2020), who posited that embedding inclusive pedagogy in teacher education equips teachers to manage learner diversity effectively. Similarly, McLoughlin and Lewis (2018) emphasized that programs providing hands-on experience in diverse classrooms enhance teachers’ preparedness for inclusive education.

Timmons (2021) also highlighted that mentoring and practical exposure in teacher training is critical for promoting inclusive practices. These results suggest that strategic integration of theoretical knowledge, practical experience, and mentoring forms the foundation of effective inclusive practices in teacher education. The findings of the study revealed that inclusive practices enhance teachers' abilities to understand learner differences, adapt instructional methods, and provide individualized support. The findings are in consonance with Forlin (2020), who posited that teacher education programs emphasizing inclusive practices strengthen teachers' capacity to deliver equitable learning opportunities. Erdem and Kılıç (2022) further stated that inclusive preparation equips teachers with skills to design differentiated lessons, manage diverse classrooms, and meet social, cognitive, and emotional needs of learners. Additionally, Smith (2019) emphasized that inclusive approaches foster reflective practices, enabling teachers to address the diverse needs of early childhood learners effectively. These findings highlight that inclusive practices are crucial for teacher readiness and competence in diverse learning environments.

The findings of the study revealed that several challenges hinder effective integration of inclusive practices, including limited practical exposure, inadequate professional development, insufficient policy implementation, and lack of teaching resources. The findings are in consonance with Erdem and Kılıç (2022), who posited that systemic and structural barriers reduce the effectiveness of inclusive strategies. Okeke (2021) also emphasized that inadequate institutional support and resource constraints hinder teacher preparedness for inclusive classrooms. Similarly, Smith (2019) highlighted that inconsistent policies and lack of adaptation to local contexts limit the implementation of inclusive practices. These results indicate that addressing institutional, systemic, and resource challenges is critical for enhancing inclusive education in teacher preparation programs.

The findings of the study revealed that promoting inclusive practices requires ongoing professional development, integration of practical classroom experiences, policy support, curriculum redesign, and adequate teaching resources. The findings are in consonance with Florian (2020), who posited that combining theory with practical exposure improves teachers' inclusive competencies. McLoughlin and Lewis (2018) further emphasized that mentorship and hands-on training significantly enhance inclusive teaching skills. Timmons (2021) noted that contextual adaptation of global inclusive frameworks strengthens teacher preparedness, while Forlin (2020) argued that policy support and institutional commitment are necessary to sustain inclusive practices. These findings suggest that deliberate, well-supported measures, including training, resources, and policies, are essential to strengthen inclusive practices in early childhood teacher education programs.

### **Educational Implications of the Study**

The study provides important insights for teacher education programs by highlighting strategies that effectively promote inclusive practices in early childhood classrooms. It contributes to knowledge by demonstrating how well-designed teacher preparation, practical exposure, and policy support enhance teachers' ability to address diverse learner needs. The findings offer evidence-based guidance for curriculum designers, policymakers, and educators to strengthen inclusive pedagogy, improve teacher competence, and ultimately enhance learning outcomes for all children.

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

This study contributes to knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the strategies, challenges, and measures associated with promoting inclusive practices in early childhood teacher education. It establishes a clear link between inclusive pedagogy, teacher preparedness, and effective classroom management for diverse learners. The findings offer practical and policy-relevant insights that can guide curriculum development, professional training, and institutional support, strengthening the capacity of teacher education programs to produce educators equipped for inclusive classrooms globally and in local contexts.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that early childhood teacher education programs employ a range of strategies to promote inclusive practices, including inclusive pedagogy courses, practical classroom simulations, collaborative teaching, and differentiated instruction. Inclusive practices enhance teachers' ability to address diverse learner needs, adapt instruction, and provide individualized support. However, challenges such as limited practical exposure, insufficient professional development, inadequate policy implementation, and lack of resources hinder the full integration of inclusive practices. The study also identified that deliberate measures, including ongoing training, curriculum redesign, and policy support, are essential for effectively promoting inclusive practices. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening teacher education programs to equip educators with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed for inclusive classrooms.

### **Recommendations**

1. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:
2. Teacher education programs should integrate inclusive pedagogy into the curriculum to ensure all teachers are adequately prepared for diverse classrooms.

3. Institutions should provide continuous professional development for teachers to strengthen their inclusive teaching skills.
4. Policy makers should ensure effective implementation and support of inclusive education policies in teacher education programs.
5. Teacher education programs should include practical classroom experiences that expose teachers to diverse learners and real-world inclusive teaching scenarios.
6. Adequate teaching resources and instructional materials should be provided to support inclusive practices in early childhood education settings.

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