

Evaluation of the Child Support Process in the Criminal System at the Class II Special Child Development Institution in Bandung

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Abstract:

This study aims to evaluate the legal protection process for children within Indonesia's juvenile sentencing system, emphasizing the application of child protection principles and the concept of restorative justice. From a normative standpoint, Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (SPPA) establishes protection mechanisms through diversion and non-repressive approaches. However, research findings indicate that the application of these principles faces various obstacles, including limited understanding among law enforcement officials, a lack of supporting facilities—such as Correctional Centers and Special Development Institutions for Children—and a legal culture that tends to prioritize punitive measures. An analysis based on legal protection theory reveals that the existing system does not yet fully guarantee legal certainty, utility, and justice for children. Meanwhile, the concept of restorative justice offers a more humane alternative by prioritizing rehabilitation and shared responsibility among the offender, the victim, and the community, although its implementation remains suboptimal. Thus, it can be concluded that Indonesia's juvenile sentencing system requires regulatory strengthening, capacity building for officials, and multi-stakeholder collaboration to ensure that child protection principles are genuinely realized in practice.

Keywords: correctional centers; legal protection; sentencing system.

INTRODUCTION

The juvenile criminal justice system in Indonesia has developed rapidly following the enactment of Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (UU SPPA). This marked a paradigm shift by prioritizing the principle of restorative justice. The legal process for children places greater emphasis on restoring the child's condition, rehabilitation, and social reintegration (Marlina, 2018). The state is obligated to provide a special assistance mechanism for children at every stage of the judicial process. This assistance encompasses legal, psychological, social, and educational aspects so that children do not lose their rights as individuals (Muladi, 2017). The presence of an assistant is not merely a formality, but an important instrument in ensuring that the principle of the best interests of the child is truly realized. Assistance is also positioned as part of child protection that aligns with international commitments, particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ratified through Presidential Decree Number 36 of 1990. This means that national regulations harmonize with international legal norms. This emphasizes that the juvenile criminal justice system must be oriented towards protection, not just punishment.

Children serving their sentences at the Class II Bandung Correctional Institution (LPKA) tend to come from diverse backgrounds. Most come from families with low levels of education and low economic status. This situation demonstrates a correlation between socioeconomic vulnerability and the risk of children engaging in criminal behavior. In this context, juvenile delinquency must be viewed not only as a result of individual errors but also as a structural problem requiring a holistic approach. In such circumstances, the role of mentoring becomes crucial. Mentoring provided by community counselors, social workers, and educators at LPKA also focuses on psychological and educational support. This is crucial to ensure that children serving their sentences do not lose their way (Rani, 2020). With intensive mentoring, the process of social reintegration of children is expected to be more effective. Furthermore, mentoring also serves as a means to reduce the social stigma often attached to children of former prisoners. Without appropriate intervention, this stigma can become a serious barrier to children's reintegration into society. Therefore, the LPKA, together with related parties, needs to develop comprehensive development programs that emphasize not only disciplinary aspects but also the provision of life skills, moral education, and constructive social values. However, in practice, the implementation of child support often does not run according to regulatory mandates. Normatively, the SPPA Law guarantees that every child has the right to receive special treatment, including the right to be accompanied through all stages of the judicial process. However, empirically, its implementation still faces various challenges, ranging from limited numbers of support staff, lack of training for community mentors, to limited development facilities at LPKA (Rahayuningsih et al., 2025).

This gap between regulations and practice demonstrates a structural problem within the juvenile criminal justice system. While regulations are relatively progressive and pro-child, institutional capacity and human resources remain inadequate (Hiariej, 2020). This situation poses a risk of neglecting children's rights, preventing the primary goal of the Child Protection and Child Protection Law (SPPA Law) to provide restorative justice and child protection from being fully achieved. Addressing this issue requires strategies to strengthen institutional capacity, including improving human resource quality, providing better infrastructure, and fostering cross-sector collaboration (Dwiyanto, 2018). With strong synergy, it is hoped that the gap between legal ideals and the reality of implementation can be narrowed, enabling child support to truly become an effective protection instrument. At the Class II LPKA Bandung, the support program has been designed to encompass formal education, religious services, sports, skills training, and psychological counseling (Pemasyarakatan, 2019). The presence of these various programs demonstrates a systematic government effort to ensure that children in care receive comprehensive development opportunities.

Formal education, for example, focuses on sustaining children's right to learn, while religious activities and psychological counseling are directed at moral development and mental health recovery. However, preliminary research reveals that the effectiveness of these programs still faces serious challenges. The number of mentors is very limited compared to the number of children in their care, so the intensity of guidance, which should be personalized, is less than optimal. As a result, many children do not receive proportional attention, potentially reducing the effectiveness of the designed guidance program (Ramadan & Aulia, 2025). Furthermore, there are gaps in access to guidance services among children in care. Not all children have the opportunity to participate in skills training programs or receive regular psychological counseling. This inequality indicates that although the mentoring program is well-designed, its implementation is still not fully able to meet the individual needs of children. This situation reflects an implementation gap that requires in-depth evaluation. Theoretically, child mentoring in the LPKA (Coroner's Institute for Child Protection) is not only intended as a form of legal protection but also as an important instrument for preparing children for their return to society (Marlina, 2018). Without optimal support, children are at risk of committing crimes again (recidivism), which will ultimately hinder the goals of correctional services.

The success of the juvenile criminal justice system depends heavily on the effectiveness of mentoring in instilling the values of discipline, responsibility, and social skills in the children in its care. If mentoring is conducted in accordance with the principles of restorative justice, children will be more easily accepted back into society because they have been restored both psychologically and socially. Conversely, if the mentoring program is merely a formality, children will again face social stigma that worsens their condition after leaving the LPKA. Therefore, in-depth evaluations of the mentoring mechanism are necessary periodically. This evaluation is not only to measure the success of the program but also to identify improvement strategies so that mentoring truly functions as a means of fostering and restoring children (Muladi, 2017). In this way, the main objectives of the juvenile criminal justice system, as stipulated in the SPPA Law, can be realized.

In addition to challenges to program effectiveness, another crucial issue is the lack of coordination between the parties that should be involved in child support. Normatively, child support is the result of synergy between various agencies, such as the Correctional Center (Bapas), the Social Services Agency, psychologists, educators, and community leaders. This multi-stakeholder involvement is crucial because children's problems cannot be viewed solely from a legal perspective, but also from social, educational, and psychological perspectives. However, in practice, the synergy between these institutions has not been optimally implemented. There is overlapping authority between related agencies, resulting in ineffective coordination (Hiariej, 2020). For example, the role of Bapas as community counselors is often not optimally integrated with psychosocial services from the Social Services Agency or educational support from schools. As a result, children in care do not receive holistic support services in accordance with the principles of restorative justice. This issue also impacts the sustainability of the support program after the child leaves the LPKA. The lack of coordination results in a lack of guarantees for the continuity of support in the community. In fact, the post-release period is the most vulnerable period for children, because in this phase they need strong social support so that they do not return to an environment that encourages them to engage in criminal behavior (Pramukti & Primaharsya, 2018).

From a legal perspective, the existence of this gap indicates a weak implementation of the principle of the best interest of the child, which should be the primary basis for all child-related policies. Therefore, every action by law enforcement officers and correctional institutions concerning children should always consider the best interests of the child's development. However, practice in the field still shows a tendency towards a retributive paradigm, namely an orientation towards punishment that emphasizes the aspect of retribution, rather than a restorative paradigm that emphasizes recovery (Marlina, 2018). This is evident in the continued dominance of strict disciplinary approaches and internal punishments in LPKA, compared to more persuasive and rehabilitative guidance efforts. This gap shows that despite progressive regulations, the mindset of officials and institutional systems is still oriented towards the old model. This discrepancy between legal norms and the reality of implementation indicates a problem of law in action that is not aligned with the law on the books (Rahardjo, 2017). Therefore, there is a need for a paradigm shift among legal practitioners and correctional officials. This phenomenon raises a serious question: does the mentoring process at LPKA Class II Bandung truly guarantee children's rights in accordance with applicable regulations? Evaluation is crucial to answering this question, given that the primary goal of the Juvenile Justice System (SPPA) Law is to establish a juvenile criminal justice system oriented toward protection and rehabilitation. Without a comprehensive evaluation, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the policy's implementation has met its legal mandate.

This evaluation encompasses two main dimensions: effectiveness and efficiency. In terms of effectiveness, the evaluation assesses whether the mentoring provided has a positive impact on changing children's behavior. In terms of efficiency, the evaluation examines the extent to which available resources, including mentoring personnel, facilities, and funds, are being optimally utilized (Dwiyanto, 2018). Thus, the evaluation serves not only as a form of oversight but also as a basis for formulating more targeted policies. Furthermore, the evaluation results are expected to provide concrete recommendations for improvement. For example, increasing the number of community mentors, strengthening cross-agency coordination, or adding mentoring facilities tailored to children's needs. With data-based recommendations, it is hoped that the gap between legal norms and practice can be further narrowed. Beyond providing legal protection, child mentoring also has psychological and social dimensions that should not be overlooked. Many children in foster care experience trauma due to the legal process and their life experiences before entering the Correctional Institution (LPKA), including factors such as family violence or poor social environments. This condition is exacerbated by the stigma of society which often views foster children as "naughty" or "problematic", so that they feel alienated (Taali et al., 2024).

Adequate support is essential to help children overcome this trauma and rebuild their self-confidence. Psychological counseling programs, spiritual guidance, and social support from support staff are crucial instruments to ensure that the rehabilitation process is comprehensive, not just limited to the legal aspects. Therefore, support serves a dual function: providing legal protection and a means of psychosocial recovery. Empirical evidence indicates that some juveniles re-offend after leaving the Correctional Institution (LPKA). One factor influencing this recidivism phenomenon is the suboptimal support system they receive during their sentences. This underscores the importance of strengthening support, as without appropriate intervention, the correctional goal of rehabilitating juveniles and

reintegrating them into society will not be achieved. This research is significant because it addresses several fundamental dimensions: the legal dimension related to the implementation of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System Law; the social dimension highlighting the fulfillment of children's rights in the correctional environment; and the psychological dimension emphasizing children's needs in dealing with trauma and the adaptation process (Kurniawan et al., 2025). Therefore, this research is not only relevant to the development of juvenile criminal law but also makes a significant contribution to the practice of support in LPKA. While some previous research has focused generally on child protection aspects within the criminal justice system or on the effectiveness of correctional institutions as a whole, only a few studies have specifically examined the child support process within the Correctional Institutions (LPKA), emphasizing a comprehensive evaluation of the development stages, from initial assessment to social reintegration. This gap represents the research gap that this study aims to fill.

Legal protection theory asserts that the function of law is essentially to protect individual rights, particularly those in vulnerable social and legal positions (Hadjon, 2017). Children serving sentences in correctional institutions (LPKA) are a vulnerable group, as they face not only a complex legal system but also social pressure and societal stigma. Therefore, child support is not merely an administrative obligation but a concrete form of legal protection mandated by the state. Using legal protection theory, we can analyze the extent to which the positive legal system, specifically the Child Protection and Child Protection Law (SPPA) and the Child Protection Law, is truly capable of protecting children's best interests. If regulations are merely normative without effective implementation, the protection provided will be illusory. This can create a gap between the objectives of the law and the reality on the ground, potentially neglecting children's rights. This theory also emphasizes the importance of the law siding with children as vulnerable parties in the criminal justice system (Muladi, 2017). This means that the state, through law enforcement officials, community counselors, and LPKA administrators, is obliged to ensure that children's rights, especially their rights to education, health care, and guidance, are maximally protected. The SPPA Law prioritizes the concept of restorative justice as a new paradigm in child criminalization. This paradigm emerged from criticism of the retributive system, which emphasizes revenge and imprisonment, which in many cases actually worsens the child's condition (Marlina, 2018). In contrast, restorative justice aims to repair social damage and restore relationships.

Within the framework of restorative justice theory, child support at the LPKA (Coroner's Institution for Rehabilitation) is a key instrument. This support not only facilitates a fair legal process but also provides psychological, social, and moral support so that children can internalize positive values during their rehabilitation. Therefore, the effectiveness of support can be used as a measure of the extent to which restorative justice principles are truly implemented in practice. Analysis using this theory is crucial for assessing whether support practices at LPKA Class II Bandung are consistent with the spirit of restorative justice or are still influenced by a retributive paradigm. If support is merely positioned as a formality, the goals of juvenile punishment, namely recovery and social reintegration, will not be achieved. Conversely, if support is carried out optimally, juveniles will be better prepared to return to society without the burden of stigma and the potential for recidivism (Subroto & Agastya, 2024). The novelty of this research lies in its focus on evaluating the child support process within the criminal system at LPKA Class II Bandung, with an approach that integrates legal, social, and psychological perspectives. The effectiveness of child support and the challenges faced, so that the resulting recommendations are not only normative but also applicable. The specific objectives of this research are to describe how the child support process is implemented at LPKA Class II Bandung, identify the obstacles that arise in its implementation, and evaluate the extent to which the process is able to realize the principles of child protection in the criminal justice system. With these objectives, this research is expected to contribute to strengthening child support policies and practices in Indonesia.

METHOD

The research uses descriptive-analytical, which attempts to describe legal facts as they are, while analyzing them by connecting normative provisions with empirical reality. With this specification, the research is not only limited to data presentation, but also conducts a critical review of the implementation of child assistance at LPKA Class II Bandung based on applicable regulations, especially Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (UU SPPA). The normative juridical approach through a study

of laws and regulations, legal doctrine, and literature relevant to child protection in the criminal justice system (Ibrahim, 2018). To determine how these norms are applied in the field, especially in the implementation of child assistance at LPKA Class II Bandung. The data collection technique is through literature study, namely the collection of data from primary legal materials in the form of laws and international legal instruments, as well as secondary legal materials such as books, journals, and previous research (Marzuki, 2017). Interviews were conducted with LPKA officials, community counselors, social workers, and foster children to gather factual information regarding the assistance process. Observations were conducted by directly observing the implementation of the guidance program at the LPKA. Documentation was conducted through the collection of archives, activity reports, and official records regarding child support. The research phase was carried out in stages. In the initial phase, the researcher developed a research design, determined research instruments, and collected relevant literature. Next, the researcher entered the data collection phase, both from literature studies and field data through interviews and observations. The researcher carried out processing and classification stages so that the data could be organized according to the research focus. The final stage was analysis and report preparation, in which all data was interpreted using relevant theories and then presented in the form of a scientific paper (Erlianti et al., 2024).

Data analysis was not measured numerically but rather described descriptively. The analysis was conducted using a deductive-inductive mindset. The deductive approach was used to derive an understanding of the general provisions of applicable law into concrete cases at the LPKA, while the inductive mindset was used to draw conclusions from empirical data towards the formulation of general recommendations (Fajar & Achmad, 2015). With this method, it is hoped that the research will be able to provide a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of child support within the criminal justice system. The research location was centered at LPKA Class II Bandung, a special correctional institution for children under the auspices of the Ministry of Immigration and Correctional Services of the Republic of Indonesia and the Directorate General of Corrections of the Republic of Indonesia (Hamid & Wulandari, 2022). This LPKA was chosen because it plays a central role in the implementation of the juvenile criminal justice system in West Java, thus providing relevant data regarding ongoing support practices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The child support process at the Class II Bandung Correctional Institution (LPKA) is essentially an implementation of a new paradigm that emphasizes rehabilitative principles, not retributive ones. Children in conflict with the law are not treated as criminals, but rather as individuals in need of guidance and recovery. This approach aligns with the mandate of Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (UU SPPA), which emphasizes the protection and best interests of children. The initial stage of the support process begins when a child enters the LPKA, through the admission and registration process. At this stage, an initial assessment is conducted to determine the child's social, psychological, and educational background. This assessment serves as an important basis for developing an individual development program tailored to the child's needs and potential. This demonstrates that the Class II Bandung LPKA emphasizes not only punishment but also measurable and targeted development planning. Subsequent support is directed at aspects of formal education. Children at the Class II Bandung LPKA continue to have access to education appropriate to their level. The LPKA collaborates with nearby schools and non-formal educational institutions to ensure that children's right to education is not interrupted even while they are serving their sentence. Fulfillment of the right to education. In addition to formal education, children also receive skills guidance as part of the mentoring process. The skills program includes job training, entrepreneurial skills, and other technical skills. The goal is to equip children with practical skills so they can live independently after serving their sentences. This approach implies that social reintegration not only restores children's psychological well-being but also prepares them to be productive members of society (Fardian & Santoso, 2020).

From a psychological perspective, the mentoring process at the Class II Bandung Correctional Institution (LPKA) involves counselors and psychologists who help children overcome trauma and feelings of guilt. Many children in the facility experience mental stress due to societal stigma and painful experiences during the legal process. Therefore, psychological mentoring is a crucial component in helping children rebuild their self-confidence and motivation to improve themselves. Religious mentoring is also a crucial pillar in the development process. LPKA Class II Bandung provides spiritual guidance through regular worship services, religious studies, and religious counseling. This program aims to instill moral, ethical, and

spiritual values in children, equipping them with faith to guide them in their future lives. This religious approach has been proven to strengthen children's mental resilience during their sentence. In practice, child mentoring at LPKA Class II Bandung is not only carried out by internal staff but also involves collaboration with external parties. For example, collaboration with educational institutions, job training institutions, community organizations, and NGOs that care about children. This collaboration is crucial because it provides a variety of programs and expands children's opportunities for support upon their return to society (Amri & Dewi, 2024).

The theory of legal protection essentially emphasizes that the law provides a sense of security, justice, and certainty for every citizen, including vulnerable groups such as children. The theory of legal protection also emphasizes two forms of protection: preventive and repressive. Preventive protection is evident in the LPKA's efforts to provide formal education, skills training, and spiritual guidance. This program is intended to prevent children from re-committing crimes after leaving the institution. Meanwhile, repressive protection is realized through psychological assistance to overcome trauma and legal counseling provided while the child is serving his or her sentence (Muladi, 2018). Despite its effectiveness, this form of protection still faces obstacles in the form of societal stigma against former juveniles. When children return to society, they are often not well received, making them vulnerable to repeat crimes. This indicates that legal protection in theory has not been fully realized, as protection should encompass comprehensive social reintegration, including the elimination of social stigma.

From the perspective of legal protection theory, efforts must be made to strengthen inter-agency coordination mechanisms. The Ministry of Immigration and Correctional Services of the Republic of Indonesia, through the LPKA (Rehabilitation and Correctional Institution), cannot work alone; it needs to involve local governments, educational institutions, social services, and NGOs. Legal protection for children does not stop at the LPKA phase, but continues through to the social reintegration phase in society (Ristanti & Nirmala, 2025). It can be concluded that the application of legal protection theory in assisting children at LPKA Class II Bandung has been ongoing, but is not yet optimal. The principle of legal protection, which emphasizes certainty, justice, and benefit, is only a norm, while its implementation still faces structural and cultural obstacles. Therefore, systemic improvements are needed so that legal protection for children is not merely a normative discourse but is actually realized substantively. In practice at LPKA Class II Bandung, the concept of restorative justice is evident in efforts to build children's awareness of their actions. Children are guided to understand the impact of their actions on the victim and society, and are directed to regret their actions and not repeat them. This process is in line with the goals of restorative justice, namely to foster a sense of responsibility in the perpetrator and repair social damage caused by criminal acts (Marlina, 2018).

Assistance through educational programs, skills training, sports, and religious guidance is also a form of restorative justice. These programs are designed to holistically restore children intellectually, morally, and socially. The orientation of the program is no longer punitive, but rehabilitative. However, there is a gap between the ideals of restorative justice and actual practice. One of these is the limited involvement of victims and the community in the child development process. To date, the development process has been largely internal within the Correctional Institution (LPKA), while the relationship between the child and the victim is rarely directly restored. Yet, one of the core elements of restorative justice is reconciliation between the perpetrator and the victim. Another obstacle is the persistent negative stigma surrounding children in the community. When they leave the LPKA, the community often refuses to accept them back. This situation contradicts the goal of restorative justice, which emphasizes social reintegration. Without community acceptance, the development provided in the LPKA will lose its meaning, as children will be marginalized again and at risk of reoffending. To address this, a systemic strengthening of the restorative justice model is necessary. First, involve victims or their families in the development process through guided mediation or reconciliation programs. Second, building partnerships with the community through outreach activities to ensure reintegration of children in foster care. Third, expanding the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs, social organizations, and educational institutions) in supporting the social reintegration process (Subroto & Nugroho, 2024).

Child support at the Class II Bandung Correctional Institution (LPKA) already reflects some principles of restorative justice, particularly in terms of child rehabilitation. However, its implementation remains suboptimal, particularly in terms of victim and community involvement. To truly realize the principle of "the best interest of the child," the restorative justice approach must be strengthened, so

that children are not only restored as individuals but also welcomed back into their communities without stigma. Although the Class II Bandung LPKA has attempted to implement various child support programs in accordance with the Child Protection and Child Protection Law (UU SPPA), in practice, several obstacles hinder its effectiveness. These obstacles arise from both internal and external aspects involving the community and the social environment. Identifying these obstacles is crucial as a basis for evaluation and formulation of corrective policies. Furthermore, based on Law Number 22 of 2022 concerning Corrections, the implementation of guidance and support for Correctional Students is an integral part of the criminal justice system, which emphasizes a restorative and reintegrative approach. This law emphasizes that development in Special Child Development Institutions (LPKA) must be oriented toward restoring social relationships, character education, and developing children's potential so they can return to functioning as responsible members of society. Article 5 of the Corrections Law emphasizes that the implementation of corrections must be based on the principles of protection, non-discrimination, respect for human dignity, development, social reintegration, and respect for human rights (Suprpto & Subroto, 2023).

Articles 12 and 13 of the same law state that children undergoing rehabilitation have the right to education, job training, health services, social assistance, and access to restorative justice. This demonstrates that the LPKA's function extends beyond simply carrying out punishments, but also guarantees the protection and fulfillment of children's rights comprehensively. Therefore, the effectiveness of rehabilitation at LPKA is greatly influenced by the availability of human resources, rehabilitation facilities, and cross-sectoral collaboration between correctional institutions, local governments, and the community. Therefore, an evaluation of the implementation of the child rehabilitation program at LPKA Class II Bandung needs to consider the provisions of Law Number 22 of 2022 concerning Corrections, particularly regarding the principle of protection and rehabilitation based on social reintegration, so that juvenile rehabilitation efforts can proceed in accordance with the objectives of national law in realizing restorative justice and humanity. A frequently encountered obstacle is the limited number of professional support staff. Ideally, each child in foster care should receive personal support tailored to their psychological, social, and educational needs. However, the reality on the ground shows that the number of counselors, psychologists, and social workers is still far from adequate compared to the number of children who need to be supported. This situation prevents the mentoring program from being provided optimally and sustainably. This is hampered by limited facilities and infrastructure. The Class II LPKA Bandung still faces limitations in learning spaces, skills facilities, and job training tools, which should be the primary means of developing children. These limitations impact the variety of programs available. As a result, not all children receive skills training tailored to their interests and potential (Subroto & Mardiansyah, 2024).

Obstacles stem from the child's own psychological side. Most children in foster care come with a background of trauma, family problems, and psychological pressure due to societal stigma. These obstacles complicate the mentoring process, as in addition to providing education and skills, mentors must also focus on the child's psychological recovery. Without adequate psychological treatment, mentoring loses its effectiveness. Social stigma often views foster children as "petty criminals" who are difficult to reform. As a result, when children return to society after completing their sentences, they are often not well received. This is a major obstacle to social reintegration, which should be the ultimate goal of the mentoring process. Low family participation in supporting the child's mentoring process. In many cases, families neglect the child's condition due to economic reasons, time constraints, or even shame. Yet, the family is a crucial factor in the success of a child's rehabilitation. Without family support, children are vulnerable to reoffending after leaving the Correctional Institution (LPKA). Obstacles stem from regulations and inter-agency coordination. Although the SPPA Law mandates the principle of restorative justice, its implementation in the field has not been fully integrated. For example, coordination between the Child Protection and Rehabilitation Center (LPKA) and social services, education departments, and employment agencies is often suboptimal. This results in many child development programs lacking continuity after the children return to the community. Child development programs require significant costs, ranging from providing educational facilities and skills training to counseling services (Subroto & Saddam, 2024). However, budget allocations for LPKA are often limited, forcing institutions to adapt programs to existing conditions. This, of course, reduces the quality of what should be a more comprehensive support program.

The monitoring process for the effectiveness of the mentoring program is not yet fully systematic and measurable. Evaluations are often administrative in nature and do not yet lead to substantial analysis of the

program's true impact on behavioral changes in the children in its care. Without in-depth evaluation, it is difficult to determine the effectiveness of the mentoring program. This emphasizes the need for comprehensive improvement efforts, ranging from adding professional staff, strengthening facilities, increasing family support, and optimizing cross-sector coordination. With these steps, obstacles to the implementation of child mentoring at the Class II LPKA Bandung can be minimized, thereby achieving the goals of rehabilitation and social reintegration. The constraint of limited human resources is a significant factor. The number of community mentors, counselors, and experts who should be mentoring children is still very limited compared to the number of children in its care (Yunus & Wiwin, 2025). As a result, mentoring cannot be carried out intensively, so that children's right to receive personal guidance as guaranteed by the SPPA Law is not fully realized. From a legal protection theory perspective, this indicates a gap between legal guarantees that provide full protection to children and inadequate practice in the field.

The constraints of facilities and supporting infrastructure at the Correctional Institution (LPKA) also pose a barrier. Ideally, child support should be provided in special, child-friendly spaces, with the support of psychologists, counselors, and other rehabilitative activities. However, empirically, the available facilities are still limited, thus unable to accommodate the needs of all children in their care. This condition indicates the weak implementation of preventive and repressive legal protection, as stated by Satjipto Rahardjo, who stated that legal protection should be present to prevent and address all forms of violations of individual rights, in this case the rights of children in their care (Rahardjo, 2019). Coordination constraints between institutions also affect the effectiveness of support. The process of supporting children should ideally involve collaboration between LPKA, the Correctional Institution (Bapas), the Social Service, and other related institutions. However, in practice, disharmony or overlapping authority often occurs. This weak coordination prevents children from receiving comprehensive support services. From the perspective of legal protection theory, this weak coordination hinders the fulfillment of children's rights, which should be guaranteed integrally by the applicable legal system.

Stigma The social stigma against children in foster care is also a serious obstacle. Society often views children in conflict with the law as mere "criminals," ignoring their status as children who still need guidance and protection. This stigma complicates the process of social reintegration for children after guidance. However, within the framework of legal protection, the state is obliged to protect children from discrimination and provide equal opportunities for self-improvement. Thus, these obstacles indicate that while children in conflict with the law are legally guaranteed legal protection, empirically, its implementation has not been optimal. Legal protection theory teaches that protection is not limited to written regulations but must also be realized in practice through consistent law enforcement, the provision of adequate resources, and broader community support. Child support at the Class II Bandung Correctional Institution (LPKA) is essentially intended to ensure that children in conflict with the law continue to receive their full rights and are directed towards a process of recovery, not just punishment. This principle aligns with the concept of restorative justice, namely case resolution that emphasizes recovery, social reintegration, and shared responsibility between perpetrators, victims, and the community. However, in practice, the implementation of this concept faces a number of obstacles (Nur, 2024).

Regulatory constraints are not yet fully consistent. Although Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Child Protection and Juvenile Justice System (SPPA) affirms restorative justice as the basis for resolving juvenile cases, technically, implementing regulations remain inconsistent, making it difficult for correctional officers to implement them. This often results in child support services reverting to a formalistic and repressive approach. This situation demonstrates that the value of restoration, which is at the heart of restorative justice, has not been fully internalized in practice. There is minimal understanding of restorative justice among officers and the public. Law enforcement officers, especially in the field, sometimes still understand the juvenile justice process in terms of punishment, rather than restoration. Similarly, the public often demands harsh punishments rather than restoration. These cultural barriers prevent child support programs from fully implementing a restorative approach. The essence of restorative justice is to create space for dialogue, mediation, and the restoration of social relationships (Marlina, 2018). Restorative justice demands the active participation of victims and their families in the resolution process. However, in practice, many victims or their families are reluctant to participate due to deep hurt or disappointment. As a result, the mediation and reconciliation processes that should be a crucial part of child support often fail. This demonstrates the gap between the ideals of restorative justice and the reality on the ground (Arief, 2017).

Lack of rehabilitation program facilities within the LPKA (Correction and Rehabilitation Institution). Counseling programs, skills training, and social activities aimed at restoring children to their community are still very limited. Without these facilities, the concept of restorative justice is difficult to implement because there is no real space for children's self-recovery or social relationships. Child support should be oriented towards social reintegration, not simply filling prison sentences. The strong social stigma against children in custody also poses a major challenge. The concept of restorative justice requires society to open a welcoming space for children who have undergone the rehabilitation process. However, reality shows that society often rejects their return, even in some cases treating them discriminatorily. As a result, the goals of social recovery and reconciliation are difficult to achieve. Therefore, when analyzed from the perspective of the restorative justice concept, the obstacles to implementing child support are not only technical and administrative, but also cultural and structural (Sudewo, 2021). Therefore, strengthening regulations, increasing the capacity of officials, educational programs for the community, and adequate rehabilitation facilities are needed. Without these, child support will remain trapped in a retributive paradigm, not a restorative one.

An evaluation of the child support process at the Class II Bandung Correctional Institution (LPKA) shows that child protection efforts within the criminal justice system have essentially been attempted, but are not yet fully optimal. Normatively, the principle of child protection is guaranteed in the SPPA Law, which emphasizes that every child in conflict with the law must receive special treatment in accordance with their human dignity and worth. Child support at the LPKA is an important instrument for realizing this protection principle. Regarding the fulfillment of children's rights to psychological and social support, the evaluation shows that the LPKA has provided counselors, community mentors, and development programs. However, the limited number of experts compared to the number of children in its care means that the support provided is not yet intensive (Muchlis, 2024). This creates a gap between the ideal of child protection in positive law and the reality of its implementation. The principle of child protection has not been fully realized due to limited human resources. Furthermore, regarding access to education and skills training, some children in care have had the opportunity to continue their formal education or participate in vocational training. These efforts reflect a form of legal protection for children's rights to development. However, evaluations have found that the quality and variety of learning programs remain limited, so not all children have access to programs that meet their needs. Within the framework of legal protection theory, this situation indicates partial, rather than comprehensive, protection (Riza & Sibarani, 2021).

In relation to fulfilling children's rights to be free from stigma, the mentoring process still faces significant challenges. Evaluation results indicate that negative labels from the social environment and from some officials still strongly adhere to children in custody. This situation has an impact on hampering their reintegration into society, even though the principle of child protection requires guarantees of non-discrimination and the elimination of social stigma. Thus, forms of legal protection that should be preventive have not been optimally implemented. Regarding the implementation of restorative justice, the evaluation indicates that mentoring at the Correctional Institution (LPKA) has attempted to apply a restorative approach, such as mediation and coaching activities that emphasize children's social responsibility. However, implementation has not been fully equitable due to limited facilities, lack of victim involvement, and limited understanding of restorative principles among officials. As a result, restorative justice, which should be the primary basis for child protection in the criminal process, has only been partially realized (Obinaru & Hammar, 2025).

From the perspective of fulfilling international standards, the principle of child protection in the penal system is in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which Indonesia ratified through Presidential Decree No. 36 of 1990. The evaluation shows that there have been adjustment efforts, such as the provision of special rooms for children and educational programs. However, the quality of implementation is still far from international standards, especially in the aspect of continuous psychosocial support. Overall, it can be concluded that although LPKA Class II Bandung has attempted to realize the principle of child protection, this achievement is still partial, not covering all dimensions of protection mandated by law. This evaluation shows a gap between normative regulations and the reality on the ground, so that the principle of child protection remains at a formalistic level, not substantive. Thus, this evaluation demonstrates the need to strengthen human resource capacity, improve the quality of supporting facilities, and internalize the concept of restorative justice more consistently. Only then will the process of child support in LPKA be able to truly realize the principle of child protection in the penal system in a comprehensive and equitable manner (Suriyanto & Eryansyah, 2025).

Law is not only understood as a written norm, but must also be present as a means of protecting human rights, especially vulnerable groups such as children (Rahardjo, 2019). In the context of the juvenile criminal justice system, this theory serves as a normative basis that the state is obliged to provide legal protection for children in conflict with the law to ensure their dignity and honor are maintained. An evaluation of the child support process at the Class II Bandung Correctional Institution (LPKA) shows that legal protection efforts exist, but their implementation is still suboptimal. Normatively, the UUSPA (Law on Penitentiary Protection) emphasizes that children serving sentences have the right to special protection, including legal, social, and psychological aspects. As a preventive legal protection aspect, child support should prevent violations of children's rights during their rehabilitation. However, limited support staff, counselors, and community mentors mean that this preventive process has not been optimally implemented. Children do not always receive intensive supervision that ensures they are protected from the risk of psychological violence or discrimination within the LPKA. From the aspect of repressive legal protection, the LPKA has provided a mechanism for handling children who experience problems during their rehabilitation (Munajat, 2023). However, these mechanisms are more administrative than substantive, and therefore do not fully provide a sense of justice for the children in their care. According to legal protection theory, repressive measures should not only stop violations but also restore the children's neglected rights.

Legal protection for children's rights to education and skills development at LPKA (Coroner's Institution for Rehabilitation and Child Protection), while still in place, is not yet evenly distributed. Evaluations show the existence of formal and vocational education programs, but limited facilities and infrastructure prevent all children from accessing these programs. This indicates that legal protection remains symbolic and does not fully address the substance of children's needs. Non-discriminatory protection is essential. However, in practice, the social stigma against children in care remains very strong, both inside and outside LPKA. This indicates that legal protection has not yet fully addressed the social dimension. Children continue to face serious obstacles in the process of social reintegration, even though the law affirms their right to be accepted back into society without discrimination (Kojongian, 2025). Therefore, based on legal protection theory, the child support process at LPKA Class II Bandung has only achieved formal legal protection, but not substantive legal protection. The protection provided is still limited to fulfilling legal procedures, while broader protection of children's rights, such as psychological, social, and reintegration needs, has not yet been fully realized. This evaluation indicates that the theory of legal protection has not been fully realized in practice, resulting in a gap between normative objectives and the reality of implementation. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen human resource capacity, improve facilities, and internalize the principle of non-discrimination in all forms of assistance so that child protection is truly implemented comprehensively. The concept of restorative justice emphasizes restoration of conditions, fulfillment of children's rights, and restoration of social relations between perpetrators, victims, and the community. This principle has been affirmed in the Child Protection Act (UU SPPA), which makes restorative justice the foundation for handling juvenile cases. Therefore, child assistance at the Class II Bandung LPKA (Corporate Child Protection Institution) should be directed towards achieving the goal of recovery, not merely punishment (Permatasari et al., 2025).

Evaluations show that the child support process at the Child Protection and Correctional Institution (LPKA) has attempted to adopt restorative justice values, for example through personality development programs, education, and skills training. These programs aim to restore children to their readiness to return to society, so that their sentence is not merely a punishment but also an opportunity for self-improvement. This effort aligns with the essence of restorative justice, which emphasizes rehabilitation and social reintegration (Marlina, 2018). However, in practice, the implementation of restorative justice still faces several obstacles. First, limited rehabilitative support facilities mean that children do not fully receive programs tailored to their individual needs. For example, psychological counseling facilities and mediation services are still limited, so the goal of children's psychosocial recovery is not fully achieved. Within the framework of restorative justice, this means the principle of recovery has not been optimally implemented. Support from victims and their families in the restorative process is often minimal. Ideally, restorative justice requires victim involvement to provide children with the opportunity to take responsibility for their actions and to create space for reconciliation. However, many victims are reluctant to participate due to trauma and stigma. As a result, the process of dialogue and social restoration, which is the core of restorative justice, is difficult to implement. Cultural barriers and social stigma exist. Children in foster care are often still considered "petty criminals" by society, making it difficult for them to be accepted back into the community.

even after undergoing counseling. Restorative justice, however, demands social acceptance as part of reintegration. This situation indicates that the implementation of child support has not fully achieved restorative justice in a substantive sense (Pangestu, 2024).

From the perspective of the understanding of both officers and support staff, a formalistic mindset is still apparent in the implementation of guidance. Some officers focus more on fulfilling administrative procedures than on the primary goal, which is to restore the child's condition. Consequently, important values in restorative justice—such as dialogue, mediation processes, and strengthening children's social responsibility—have not been fully integrated into daily guidance practices. Therefore, when viewed from the perspective of the restorative justice concept, guidance at the Class II Bandung Child Protection Institution (LPKA) does demonstrate an effort to implement child protection principles through various guidance and rehabilitation programs. However, a number of obstacles remain, including limited supporting facilities, minimal victim involvement, continued community stigma, and less than optimal understanding of the restorative approach by officers. As a result, the ongoing process is limited to implementing the restorative approach administratively, and has not yet achieved the substantive recovery expected in the SPPA Law or the basic principles of juvenile justice.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of legal protection for children in the Indonesian criminal justice system still faces various challenges, both from a regulatory and institutional perspective, and from a practical perspective. Although a legal basis is provided through Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (SPPA), its implementation has not fully aligned with the principles of legal protection and the best interests of children. Key obstacles include limited understanding among law enforcement officials, a lack of supporting resources (such as Correctional Centers and Special Child Development Institutions), and resistance to a predominantly repressive legal culture. The concept of restorative justice offers a new, more humane paradigm for handling juvenile cases, emphasizing recovery, deliberation, and shared responsibility between perpetrators, victims, and the community. However, its implementation is often hampered by a lack of public awareness and suboptimal diversion mechanisms at every stage of the criminal justice system. Therefore, despite positive efforts, the reality on the ground shows that the principles of child protection have not been fully realized in the practice of juvenile justice in Indonesia. Improved understanding and competence of officials regarding the principles of legal protection and the application of restorative justice through ongoing training is needed. Diversion mechanisms at every stage of the juvenile justice process must be strengthened, both through implementing regulations and by enhancing the role of mediation institutions and the Child Protection Agency (Bapas). The government needs to ensure the availability of infrastructure, such as the Child Protection Institution (LPKA), rehabilitation institutions, and professional support staff to support child protection. Handling juvenile cases must involve synergy between law enforcement officials, families, schools, communities, and civil society organizations for a more comprehensive approach to child protection. Massive outreach on the principles of restorative justice and child protection is necessary to ensure the public understands that criminal punishment is not the only way to provide a deterrent effect.

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