



# Implementation and Challenges of Fulfilling Children's Rights in Child Protection Policies in Bontang City

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**Abstract.** This study analyzes the implementation and challenges of fulfilling children's rights in Bontang City based on Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2017 concerning Child-Friendly Cities (KLA). With a juridical-socio-legal approach and qualitative analysis, the results of the study showed administrative progress such as high ownership of birth certificates (99.23%), KIA (78.6%), and stunting reduction (17%). However, there is still an increase in cases of child violence and prostitution due to weak cross-sector coordination, lack of policy evaluation, and neglect of environmental aspects. The theoretical analysis of Edward III, Grindle, and Lipsky shows obstacles to communication and resources, while according to Satjipto Rahardjo and UNCRC (1989), local law should ensure the best interests of children. Regulatory revisions are needed to strengthen multi-sector collaboration, special protection, child participation, and the integration of corporate social responsibility so that Bontang truly becomes a child-friendly and equitable city.

**Keywords:** Child-Friendly City; Regional Regulations; Child Protection; Industrialization; Children's Rights.

## 1 Introduction

The fulfillment and protection of children's rights is a shared responsibility between the government, society, and families, as mandated in Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection. The State has an obligation to ensure the fulfillment of children's rights without discrimination, including the right to live, grow, develop, get an education, protection from violence, and participate in various aspects of social life. In this context, regional development policies that are oriented towards the best interests of children are a must, one of which is through the Child-Friendly City (KLA) program developed by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection.

Bontang City is one of the regions in East Kalimantan that has committed to the implementation of KLA through Regional Regulation Number 8 of 2017 concerning the Implementation of Child-Friendly Cities. This regulation is an important legal basis in a systematic effort to create a friendly, safe, and supportive environment for children's growth and development. However, the implementation of the policy has not fully covered and fulfilled the five clusters of children's rights as per the national indicators of the KLA, namely: (1) civil rights and freedoms; (2) family environment and alternative parenting; (3) basic health and welfare; (4) education, leisure use, and cultural activities; and (5) special protection.

Various evaluations and assessment results show that although Bontang has achieved the title of Child-Friendly City at the intermediate level, there are still a number of challenges in the implementation of policies in the field. These challenges include limited cross-sector coordination, the non-optimal role of community institutions and the business world, and low child participation in regional development planning. In addition, the provision of disaggregated data and an integrated monitoring mechanism between regional apparatus organizations is also still an obstacle in *evidence-based* policy-making.

Disparities in achievement between clusters are also visible, for example, in the civil rights and freedoms cluster, which does not fully guarantee children's access to legal identities such as birth certificates and Child Identity Cards (KIA). Meanwhile, in the special protection cluster, cases of violence against children and early marriage are still found, which shows the weak protection system at the community level. This condition shows that the existence of regional regulations has not been fully followed by strong program implementation and synergy capacity at the implementation level.

On the one hand, Bontang is known as an energy and petrochemical industrial city with the existence of PT Badak NGL and PT Pupuk Kaltim as the main drivers of the regional economy. Massive industrial growth has driven urbanization and labor migration, giving birth to increasingly complex social dynamics. This condition presents serious challenges in fulfilling children's rights, especially related to access to education, health services, a healthy environment, and protection from violence and exploitation [1],[2]. With the increasing pressure of industrialization, Bontang is

required to find a balance between economic development and the protection of children's basic rights.

Responding to this situation, the Bontang City Government stipulated Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2017 concerning Child-Friendly Cities (KLA). This regulation is intended as a legal basis in realizing child-friendly regional development, with the principle that economic growth must not sacrifice the interests of the next generation [3],[4]. However, in its implementation, this Regional Regulation poses a paradox. Although Bontang has won national awards as a Child-Friendly City in the categories of Nindya (2023) and Main (2025), the reality on the ground shows that the rate of child violence and prostitution is still high. This condition confirms the gap between administrative achievement and substantive protection of children [5].

Normatively, Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2017 has a strong legal basis. This regulation is sourced from the 1945 Constitution Article 28B paragraph (2), which affirms the right of children to survive, grow, and develop, as well as protection from violence and discrimination. In addition, this regulation is also based on Law No. 23 of 2002 jo. Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection which mandates the establishment of regional policies for child protection, as well as the Regulation of the Minister of PPPA on KLA, which provides an implementation framework through five clusters of children's rights: civil, family, health, education, and special protection [6],[7]. In fact, the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) are also the philosophical basis for ensuring non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to life, and respect for the views of the child [8]. Thus, this Regional Regulation stands on a strong philosophical, juridical, and sociological basis.

However, the reality of the implementation of this Regional Regulation shows that there are limitations. Bontang City's achievements are indeed quite proud: the ownership of birth certificates reached 99.23% and KIA 78.6%, the Children's Friends Information Center (PISA) has been expanded to four locations, there is a Child-Friendly Play Room, and the stunting rate has been successfully reduced from 24.6% to 17%. However, behind these achievements, the data shows an alarming paradox. In 2023, there were 128 cases of violence against children and women, an increase of 16.36% from the previous year. In addition, cases of child prostitution still appear even though the city is labeled KLA [9]. This fact shows that administrative awards do not automatically guarantee real protection for children. It is interesting to note that:

First, high administrative achievements, such as birth certificates, KIA ownership, and the provision of child-friendly facilities, show the commitment of local governments in building a child protection system [10]. However, these quantitative achievements still tend to be symbolic if they are not balanced with the fulfillment of the substance of protection, especially in the realm of prevention and handling of violence cases [11],[12]. This shows that there is a gap between regulations, administrative achievements, and the social realities that children face on a daily basis.

Second, the increase in cases of violence against children and women indicates the weakness of special protection mechanisms. Although service facilities are available,

cultural factors, weak law enforcement, and limited human resources in the field make children still vulnerable to becoming victims [13],[14]. This phenomenon shows that the regional legal instrument has not fully functioned as a *Deterrent* or provided effective protection for vulnerable groups.

Third, the rise of child prostitution cases shows structural failures in social supervision [15]. The Child-Friendly City label does not appear to be enough to close the exploitation gap that exploits the economic vulnerability of families, weak sexuality education, and the limitations of early detection systems [16],[17]. This underscores the importance of involving non-governmental actors, such as non-governmental institutions, local communities, and businesses, in strengthening child protection networks at the grassroots level.

Fourth, this paradoxical condition can be analyzed through Policy Implementation Gap Theory. According to this theory, implementation failures are caused not only by regulatory weaknesses but also by the complexity of actors, resources, and accompanying social dynamics [18],[19]. In other words, even though the KLA Regional Regulation in Bontang is already present as a progressive regulation, without cross-sector coordination and continuous evaluation, its implementation will continue to leave gaps.

Fifth, the paradox between administrative achievement and social reality also shows the need for a Child-Centered Development-based approach as popularized by UNICEF. This approach emphasizes that development should be in the best interests of the child, not just pursuing formal indicators [18],[20]. In the context of Bontang, success is not enough to be measured by the decrease in the number of birth certificates or stunting, but also by the reduction in cases of violence, exploitation, and violations of children's rights seen in the field.

Therefore, the revision of Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2017 is urgent. Some of the weaknesses that need to be improved include the limitations of multi-sector integration that has not optimally involved large industries, civil society, and educational institutions; the absence of a measurable monitoring and evaluation system; lack of attention to environmental aspects even though industrial pollution has a direct impact on children's health; and weak special protections for children victims of violence and exploitation [21],[22].

The revision of the Regional Regulation must accommodate a number of strategic steps. First, adding an article that requires the involvement of the CSR of large industries in supporting the financing of the KLA program. Second, including environmental issues as an integral part of child protection. Third, establish an independent monitoring agency that is authorized to evaluate and impose sanctions. Fourth, strengthening special protection mechanisms for cases of violence, exploitation, and trafficking of children through the emergency response system [23][24]. Finally, optimizing the Children's Forum and active participation of children in regional development deliberations, so that children are truly the subject of development.

With a more integrative, responsive, and adaptive regulatory revision, Bontang has great potential to become a truly child-friendly industrial city model. The city will not

only rely on legal legitimacy and symbolic achievements, but also present substantive protections that guarantee the future of children as the nation's next generation. Therefore, this research is important to analyze how the implementation of policies for the protection and fulfillment of children's rights in Bontang City is implemented, as well as identify the various challenges faced in an effort to realize a Child-Friendly City as a whole. The results of this study are expected to provide input for local governments in strengthening policies, cross-sectoral coordination, and evaluation mechanisms so that all children's rights clusters can be accommodated comprehensively and sustainably.

## **2 Research Design**

This research uses a juridical-socio-legal research approach, which is a legal research method that not only examines the text of laws and regulations, but also examines how these regulations are implemented in social life. This approach was chosen because the issue of Child-Friendly Cities in Bontang is not only related to the normative substance in Regional Regulation Number 8 of 2017, but also concerns the effectiveness of its implementation in the midst of complex social dynamics, such as industrialization, urbanization, and challenges in child protection.

The type of research used is descriptive-analytical, to describe the empirical conditions related to the implementation of Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2017 and analyze it within the framework of national and international laws on child protection. To obtain comprehensive data, this study relies on two types of data sources, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with various parties who play a direct or indirect role in the implementation of the policy, such as officials from the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office (DP3A), law enforcement officials, teachers, community leaders, and the Bontang City Children's Forum. Meanwhile, secondary data includes laws and regulations such as the 1945 Constitution, the Child Protection Law, Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2017, and other related regulations, accompanied by official government reports, statistical data from BPS, academic articles, and information from online media that support the research context.

Data collection is carried out through three main techniques. First, literature studies were used to review various regulations, legal literature, and policy documents related to the concept of Child-Friendly Cities. Second, documentation techniques are used to collect data from annual reports, Child-Friendly City (KLA) evaluation documents, and statistics on cases of violence against children. Third, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore more deeply the perspectives of stakeholders regarding the effectiveness of Regional Regulations and how child protection practices are carried out in the field.

The data obtained was then analyzed with an interactive qualitative approach consisting of three main stages. The first is data reduction, which is the process of sorting and filtering relevant information from all primary and secondary data that has been collected. The second stage is data presentation, where the information that has

been compiled is displayed in the form of narratives, tables, and charts to facilitate understanding and identifying certain patterns or tendencies. The third stage is the drawing of conclusions, which is carried out by linking findings in the field with legal theory, the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the principles of child protection within the framework of national law.

To ensure the validity and validity of the data obtained, this study uses source and method triangulation techniques. This is done by comparing the results of the interviews with official documents and other secondary data to ensure the consistency of information and objectivity in the analysis conducted. Through this comprehensive approach, it is hoped that this research will be able to provide a complete picture of the implementation of the Child-Friendly City policy in Bontang and the challenges faced in realizing effective child protection in the midst of ongoing social changes.

### **3 Result and Discussion**

#### **3.1. Implementation of Child Protection Policy in Bontang City**

The results of the study show that the implementation of Regional Regulation Number 8 of 2017 concerning the Implementation of Child-Friendly Cities (KLA) in Bontang City has been carried out through the formation of institutions, the preparation of cross-regional programs, and the involvement of children's forums in government activities. The local government has formed a KLA Task Force involving elements of the government, the community, the business world, and the media. However, coordination between sectors has not run optimally due to limited human resources, budgets, and the absence of an integrated evaluation mechanism.

This condition is related to the Implementation of the Edward III Policy [25] which emphasizes four important variables: communication, resources, disposition (attitude of the implementer), and bureaucratic structure. In Bontang, the inter-agency communication factor has not been fully effective because not all regional apparatus understands the KLA indicators technically. In addition, human resources in the field of child protection are still limited, especially at the village level, so the implementation of programs often depends on the initiatives of individual implementers.

According to [25], implementation failures often occur not because of bad policies, but because of weak delivery and coordination processes between implementing actors. In this context, cross-sector communication and coordination is a crucial aspect to ensure that all regional apparatus understands and carries out responsibilities according to the KLA cluster.

Bontang City, as the center of the energy and petrochemical industries, faces the classic dilemma of development. On the one hand, industrialization driven by the existence of PT Badak NGL and PT Pupuk Kaltim has made a significant contribution to increasing regional income and creating jobs for the community. This condition reflects relatively rapid economic growth as a result of massive investment in strategic sectors. From the point of view of Modernization Theory (Rostow, 1960),

this industrialization process is considered an important phase towards progress, where economic development becomes the motor of social transformation.

However, behind these achievements, there are social consequences that are not simple. The flow of urbanization and labor migration from various regions puts pressure on urban infrastructure, housing, and public services. The surge in population has implications for increasing basic service needs that local government capacity is not always able to meet. This phenomenon is in line with the analysis of the Dependency Theory [26], who emphasized that industrialization often creates new inequality because development structures favor the interests of large capital over local communities.

Another impact that arises is the gap in children's access to education. Although there are different levels of schools, the quality and equality of educational services are not fully guaranteed. Children from migrant families and economically disadvantaged groups often face limitations in obtaining quality education, either due to economic, administrative, or social discrimination. In this context, public policy needs to take advantage of an approach that places children as the main beneficiaries of development.

In addition, the limitation of children's health services is also a serious problem. The available health facilities are not proportional to the population, while the level of exposure to air, water, and soil pollution due to industrial activities further worsens children's health conditions. This situation can be understood through the framework of Sustainable Development Theory [26], which emphasizes that development must integrate economic, social, and environmental dimensions so as not to harm future generations. Thus, the neglect of environmental aspects in industrialization will have a direct impact on the quality of life of Bontang children.

From the perspective of constitutional law, this condition shows that economic growth should not be separated from the state's obligation to ensure the protection of children's rights. As mandated in Article 28B paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution, every child has the right to survive, grow up, and develop and is entitled to protection from violence and discrimination. Regulations that oversee development, especially in industrial estates such as Bontang, must be oriented towards the principle of balance between economic interests, social justice, and child protection as an investment in human resources in the future.

Responding to these challenges, the Bontang City Government issued Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2017 concerning Child-Friendly Cities. Normatively, this regulation has a strong legal basis. Her presence affirmed the region's commitment to carrying out the mandate of Law No. 23 of 2002 jo. Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection, as well as adopting the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which emphasizes non-discrimination, the best interests of children, as well as the right to life and participation. Furthermore, this Regional Regulation tries to translate five groups of children's rights as stipulated in the PPPA Ministerial Regulation, ranging from civil rights, health, education, to special protection. From a constitutional law perspective, this policy reflects the spirit of decentralization, where

local governments are given space to respond to the specific needs of their communities.

If viewed from the Social Rights Theory, the presence of this Regional Regulation is a form of state recognition of children's rights as part of the social rights of citizens that must be guaranteed by legal instruments. Regional regulations are a tangible manifestation of the government's commitment to providing equal protection, services, and opportunities for children [25],[26].

In addition, the implementation of this Regional Regulation is in line with the Social Contract Theory [27], in which the state was born from a social agreement to protect the basic rights of its citizens, including vulnerable groups such as children. Thus, Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2017 can be understood as a moral and legal contract between the local government and the community to ensure the best interests of children.

Furthermore, this legal framework also reflects the Decentralization Theory [27], which emphasizes that the delegation of authority to the regions allows for the birth of policies that are more responsive and in accordance with local needs. In the context of Bontang City, this Regional Regulation is a strategic instrument to ensure that child protection is not only a national agenda, but also internalized in regional policies in accordance with regional characteristics.

### **3.2. Achievement of Five Clusters of Fulfillment of Children's Rights**

Based on the results of the local government's internal evaluation and interviews with stakeholders, Bontang City's achievements in the five KLA clusters show significant progress in the education and health clusters, but still face obstacles in the civil rights and special protection clusters.

In the civil rights and freedom cluster, there are still children who do not have a birth certificate and a Child Identity Card (KIA). This condition has implications for children's limited access to public services and formal education. According to [11], legal identity is the main basis of all children's rights, because without state recognition of the existence of children, the fulfillment of other rights is hampered.

Meanwhile, in the special protection cluster, cases of violence against children, exploitation, and early marriage are still found. This shows the weak reporting system and community-based rehabilitation services. According to [15] in *Ecological Systems Theory*, the development and protection of children is influenced by the interaction of various systems, ranging from families, schools, communities, to macro policies. In the context of Bontang, the synergy between these systems has not yet been fully built.

The implementation of this Regional Regulation shows a fairly sharp paradox. On paper, Bontang has achieved the status of a Child-Friendly City with the Nindya Category in 2023 and moved up to the Main Category in 2025. Administrative indicators such as the ownership of birth certificates, which almost reached 100 percent, the increase in the coverage of the Child Identity Card (KIA), and the reduction of stunting rates are proof of the success of the local government.

**Table 1:** Review of Bontang City's administrative achievements:

| Child-Friendly City Indicators | Year 2022   | Year 2023   | Year 2025   | Information                           |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| Child Birth Certificate        | 98,7%       | 99,23%      | 99,5%       | Near-univers al coverage              |
| KIA Ownership                  | 65,2%       | 78,6%       | 82,4%       | The trend is increasing significantly |
| Stunting Rate                  | 24,6%       | 19,2%       | 17,0%       | Consistent decline                    |
| PISA Facilities                | 2 locations | 4 locations | 5 locations | Count                                 |
| Kid-friendly playroom          | 3 locations | 5 locations | 7 locations | Expanded service access               |

The table above shows that:

First, the achievement of birth certificate indicators shows a positive trend, with the level of ownership expected to reach *near-universal coverage* (99.5% by 2025). This achievement is significant because a birth certificate is an important prerequisite for a child to access a wide range of civil rights, including education, health, and legal protection. This high number can be understood as the successful implementation of the principles of Civil Rights and Children's Identity as affirmed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Second, the increase in the ownership of Child Identity Cards (KIA) shows a very significant trend, from 65.2% (2022) to 82.4% (2025). This shows an improvement in the population administration system and an increase in parents' awareness of the importance of identity documents for children. From the perspective of the New Public Administration Theory (New Public Management Hood, 1991), this achievement shows the effectiveness of local bureaucratic reform in providing faster, easier, and more affordable services for the community.

Third, the indicator of the stunting rate has consistently decreased from 24.6% (2022) to 17.0% (2025), which is a strategic achievement in the child health dimension. This decline not only illustrates the success of nutrition programs and health interventions but also reflects the integration of multisectors, including the role of families, health facilities, and the business world. This trend is in line with the concept of Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), which emphasizes that investment in children's health is a long-term investment in the productivity of future generations [27; 28].

Fourth, the addition of Children's Friend Information Center (PISA) facilities from 2 locations (2022) to 5 locations (2025) shows the local government's commitment to expanding access to information, education, and child-friendly services. The presence of PISA can be seen through the lens of Social Ecology Theory, where children need

support from various layers of the family, school, community, and government environment to grow optimally.

Fifth, the increase in the number of Child-Friendly Play Spaces from 3 locations (2022) to 7 locations (2025) indicates the institutionalization of children's rights to recreation and participation. The provision of public space is not only a matter of infrastructure, but also related to social development that strengthens community cohesion. From the perspective of Social Rights Theory, this kind of public service is part of the guarantee of children's social rights that must be fulfilled by the state.

However, social reality presents a different face. Official data shows that in 2023, there were 128 cases of violence against children and women, an increase of 16.36% compared to 2022. In addition, cases of child prostitution are still found at some point, even though the city has been a recipient of the Child-Friendly City award. This contradiction reveals a serious gap between written regulation and substantive protection [29],[30],[31].

Referring to Satjipto Rahardjo's legal theory, law ideally functions as a social engineering tool to engineer society towards positive change. However, in the context of Bontang, the law tends to act as a legitimacy tool to obtain administrative awards, but has not been effective in providing real protection for children, who are the most vulnerable group to the impacts of industrial development [32],[33].

Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2017 tends to be carried out as an administrative instrument to win the Child-Friendly City award, without discussing the substance of child protection in real terms. The paradox of the increase in cases of child violence and prostitution in the midst of the status of KLA shows that regulations have not been implemented progressively. Within the framework of Satjipto's theory, local laws must be an instrument of social change, for example by integrating industrial CSR, healthy environmental aspects, and special child protection mechanisms.

Satjipto Rahardjo emphasized that laws must be understood progressively, not only as a regulatory text, but as a means to achieve humanitarian goals. Law ideally functions as *a tool of social engineering* capable of bringing about positive social change, not just *a tool of legitimacy*. Meanwhile, John Rawls in *A Theory of Justice* introduces the concept of *justice as justice*, which emphasizes that public policy must protect the basic rights of every individual, especially vulnerable groups. Rawls's first principle emphasizes the same basic rights for all, while the second principle emphasizes the *principle of difference*, which is that policy should favor the weakest group.

KLA Regional Regulations must ensure that all children, including those from poor, migrant families, or those living in industrial-affected areas, receive the same protection. However, reality shows that there is still discrimination in access, both in education, health, and environmental health services [34],[35]. In Rawls' perspective, this regulation has not yet met the principle of distributive justice, as the benefits of development are enjoyed more by established groups than children from marginalized families.

Jack Donnelly argues that human rights are universal, inherent, and inalienable, including children's rights as part of human rights. Child protection is not a policy

option (*Policy options*), but the moral and legal obligations of state and local governments. The increasing cases of child violence and prostitution in Bontang reflect the low application of human rights principles in regional policies. Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2017 should not only be an administrative regulation, but should be an instrument for the protection of children's rights: the right to life, the right to growth and development, the right to protection from violence, and the right to a healthy environment. Within the framework of Donnelly's theory, the state (in this case, the Bontang City Government) has an obligation to *respect, protect, and fulfill* children's rights, which means not only respecting, but also protecting from third parties (industry, society), and meeting the basic needs of children. [34],[36].

### 3.3. Challenges in the Implementation of the Fulfillment of Children's Rights

Field findings show several key challenges in the implementation of child protection policies in Bontang City:

1. Weaknesses in cross-sector coordination, especially between the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office (DP3A), the Education Office, the Health Office, and the Social Service.
2. Limited data disaggregated by age, gender, and socioeconomic conditions, making it difficult to map needs accurately.
3. The participation of children and the community, which is still symbolic, has not been integrated into regional development planning.

According to [37], in his theory of *policy implementation*, the success of implementation is influenced by two dimensions: *the content of policy* and *the context of implementation*. In the case of Bontang, the substance of regional policies is sufficiently adequate through Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2017; however, the context of implementation, including resource support, political commitment, and bureaucratic structure, remains the main obstacle.

In addition, [37], through *the theory of street-level bureaucracy*, explained that implementers in the field (such as DP3A officers, teachers, and community cadres) have a big role in determining how policies are realized in real life. However, in practice, implementers often face limited time, budget, and institutional support, so that policies run inconsistently with their ideal goals.

Further analysis reveals a number of key weaknesses of Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2017. First, there is a lack of multi-sector integration, where the role of large industry, civil society, and educational institutions has not been fully involved in the implementation of KLA. Second, there is no continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanism, so achievements cannot be measured objectively. Third, environmental aspects are still neglected, even though air, water, and soil pollution due to industrial activities have a direct impact on children's health. Fourth, special protection is still weak, as can be seen from the high level of violence and exploitation of children that cannot be anticipated by existing legal instruments. From the perspective of *good governance*, these weaknesses reflect the weak accountability, participation, and effectiveness of public policies at the regional level.

If viewed from the System Theory [37] Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2017 has not been able to build synergistic coordination between sub-systems, such as local governments, the business world, the community, and educational institutions. In fact, in system logic, the failure of one subsystem will weaken the performance of the child protection governance system as a whole.

From the perspective of Human Rights Theory [37] and reinforced in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations (1948), the weakness of this Regional Regulation shows a violation of the principle of *the best interests of the child* that is internationally recognized. Child protection should be seen as an inherent state obligation, not just an optional policy. With weak special protections and the absence of effective evaluation mechanisms, children's rights to adequate protection, health, and environment have not been optimally guaranteed [37], [38].

Furthermore, within the framework of Sustainable Development Theory popularized by Gro Harlem Brundtland through *Our Common Future* (1987), the neglect of environmental aspects shows a lack of integration between social, economic, and ecological dimensions in regional policies. In fact, environmental sustainability greatly determines the quality of life of children in the present and future. Without partiality towards environmental issues, the implementation of KLA has the potential to only become a normative slogan with no substantive impact on children's welfare.

**Table 2:** Main Weaknesses of Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2017 Bontang Child-Friendly City

| Aspects of Weaknesses                                  | Empirical Conditions (Data/Appendix)                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Implications for Child Protection                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Lack of multi-sector integration</b>                | Large industries (PT Badak NGL, PT Pupuk Kaltim) are only involved in the form of general CSR, not yet directly integrated into the KLA program. The involvement of civil society and educational institutions is still sporadic.                      | The KLA program is mostly run by DP3A, so cross-sector collaboration is not optimal. As a result, public and business participation has no significant impact on child protection. |
| <b>Absence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms</b> | From the matrix document, the achievement indicators emphasize more on administrative reports (for example, birth certificates of 99.23% and KIA of 78.6%) without being accompanied by routine audits based on child protection. There is no sanction | Evaluation is only a formality to qualify for KLA awards, not to measure the effectiveness of child protection substantively.                                                      |

| Aspects of Weaknesses                            | Empirical Conditions (Data/Appendix)                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Implications for Child Protection                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Environmental aspects are still neglected</b> | mechanism for negligent sectors.<br>Bontang is a city of energy and petrochemical industries. However, in the KLA indicator matrix, there is no direct measurement of the impact of air, water, and soil pollution on children's health.    | Children's rights to a healthy environment have not been concretely guaranteed. Children around industrial areas are at high risk of developing health problems, but this aspect is not included in the official evaluation. |
|                                                  | <b>Weak protection special</b><br>Data shows an increase in cases of violence against children to 128 cases in 2023 (up 16.36% from 2022). Cases of child prostitution are also still being found, although the city has won the KLA award. | Regional legal instruments have not been able to provide effective special protection. Rapid response services are still minimal, so children who are victims of violence and exploitation are not optimally protected.      |

From this table, it can be seen that although the administrative achievements of Bontang City are quite good, Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2017 still has structural weaknesses. This weakness emphasizes the gap between KLA awards (administrative output) and real child protection (substantive outcomes). Some of the responses from the data table above are as follows:

First, the weak integration of multisectors shows that the role of large industries such as PT Badak NGL and PT Pupuk Kaltim is still limited to social responsibility (CSR) programs that are general, non-strategic, and directly integrated with the KLA agenda. This condition shows the dominance of *the state-centric approach*, where the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office (DP3A) becomes the main actor without full support from civil society, educational institutions, and the business world. From the perspective of Governance Theory (Rhodes, 1996), this weakness shows that collaborative governance has not yet been realized, which should be the main cornerstone of multisector-based child protection.

Second, the absence of a substantive monitoring and evaluation mechanism resulted in the KPK's achievement being measured more by administrative indicators, such as the high ownership of birth certificates (99.23%) or KIA (78.6%). However,

these indicators are not accompanied by regular child protection-based audits. The absence of a sanction mechanism also weakens the supervisory function. This condition is in line with the criticism in Policy Implementation Theory (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983), which emphasizes that policy success is not measured by administrative compliance, but must be seen by the effectiveness of achieving substantive goals, namely the protection of children's rights.

Third, the neglected environmental aspect is a serious weakness, considering that Bontang is an energy and petrochemical industrial city. The absence of indicators measuring the impact of air, water, and soil pollution on children's health in the KLA matrix indicates the limitations of the evaluation framework. In fact, the right to a healthy environment is an important part of children's rights as stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. From the perspective of Social Ecology Theory, physical environmental factors have a direct influence on children's growth and development. By ignoring this dimension, the KLA policy in Bontang has not fully guaranteed the sustainability of children's quality of life.

Fourth, the weak special protection is reflected in the increase in cases of violence against children by 16.36% in 2023 and the continued discovery of child prostitution practices, even though the city has won KLA awards. This suggests that there is a gap between administrative recognition and the reality of protection on the ground. The lack of rapid response services for child victims of violence and exploitation shows that regional legal instruments do not have strong coercive powers. This condition is in line with Human Rights Theory, which emphasizes that the fulfillment of children's rights is not sufficiently guaranteed normatively, but must be protected operationally through effective legal mechanisms.

Fifth, the general implication of these weaknesses is that although Bontang City has achieved various administrative achievements, child protection has not been fully realized substantively. The KLA award only risks becoming a symbol of administrative achievement without a real transformation in the quality of life of children. To be effective, the Bontang KLA Regional Regulation must be strengthened with multisectoral governance, an evaluation system based on the protection of children's rights, comprehensive environmental indicators, and responsive special protection mechanisms. Thus, the KLA can serve not only as a *label*, but also as a true instrument for the protection of children's rights.

Realizing the gap between regulation and reality, the revision of Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2017 is an urgent need. The direction of the revision needs to include: the integration of corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs from large industries to directly support the financing of the KLA program; the establishment of an independent monitoring agency with the authority to evaluate and impose sanctions; institutionalization of environmental aspects as part of the fulfillment of children's rights to a healthy environment; strengthen special protection with rapid response services for victims of violence, abuse and *trafficking*; and expand children's participation through Children's Forums and Children's Forums so that they are not only policy objects, but development subjects.

From the perspective of the Social Responsibility Theory, corporate moral and social obligations demand that CSR does not stop at philanthropy, but is directly oriented to the basic needs of society, including the protection and fulfillment of children's rights. By integrating CSR into the KLA program, companies can become the main actors in sustainably supporting children's welfare.

Meanwhile, the urgency of establishing an independent monitoring body is in line with the Theory of Checks and Balances, where public power requires an effective supervisory mechanism so that there is no abuse of authority. Independent monitoring institutions that have a clear mandate to evaluate and impose sanctions will strengthen accountability for the implementation of the KPK at the regional level.

Furthermore, the institutionalization of environmental aspects can be attributed to Social Ecology Theory, which emphasizes that environmental damage always has a direct impact on the vulnerability of certain social groups, especially children. Thus, including environmental issues within the framework of KLA means ensuring the survival and health of children in the present and future.

Finally, the expansion of child participation reflects the principles of Democratic Participation Theory, which emphasizes that the involvement of citizens, including children, in the policy formulation process will result in more legitimate and responsive policies. In this context, the Children's Forum and Children's Musrenbang can be a forum for substantive participation, making children the subject of development, not just the object of protection.

With these steps, the Regional Regulation on Child-Friendly Cities in Bontang not only becomes a formal regulation that stops at administrative awards, but also completely transforms into a progressive legal instrument that lives in society, is able to answer the dynamics of industrialization, while ensuring the future of the nation's next generation.

With these measures, the Child-Friendly City Regulation in Bontang not only became a formal regulation that stopped at administrative awards, but also completely turned into a progressive legal instrument. This is in line with the idea of the Law of Life, which emphasized that the law must live in society and reflect real social needs. This regional regulation should not stop as a normative text, but should become a law that functions in the daily lives of Bontang residents.

### **3.4. Implementation Strengthening Strategy**

Based on the findings, several strategies can strengthen the implementation of policies for the protection and fulfillment of children's rights in Bontang City:

Institutional strengthening of the Child-Friendly City Task Force (KLA) is a strategic step to ensure that the implementation of child protection policies runs effectively and measurably. The Task Force needs to have a clear legal mandate, either in the form of a mayoral regulation or a regional head decree, which regulates the structure, functions, and coordination mechanisms between the regional apparatus.

In addition, strengthening organizational capacity needs to be followed by the provision of adequate human resources, budgets, and technical support so that the

Task Force is not only administrative, but also able to carry out substantive policy coordination, monitoring, and evaluation functions. Cross-sector coordination is crucial considering that children's issues are multidimensional, including education, health, social, legal, and environmental. Therefore, the Task Force needs to play a role as a center for policy and data integration, while ensuring synergy between the government, the business world, civil society, and the media in the implementation of the KLA program.

1. Increasing the capacity of human resources

The quality of the implementation of child protection is highly dependent on the competence of human resources (HR), especially at the level of villages, schools, and child service institutions. Therefore, an ongoing training program is needed that focuses on understanding children's rights, techniques for handling violence cases, psychosocial approaches, and strategies for mainstreaming children's rights in every public policy and activity. This training should be designed not only for government officials, but also for teachers, health workers, and community cadres in order to form a collective awareness of the importance of a safe and child-friendly environment. This increase in the capacity of human resources is in line with the principle of *child protection mainstreaming*, where all regional development sectors are required to consider their impact on children before a policy is implemented.

2. Utilization of disaggregated data and children's information systems

The use of disaggregated data based on age, gender, disability, and socio-economic conditions is an important prerequisite in the formulation of *evidence-based policies*. Bontang City needs to develop an Integrated Child Information System, which integrates data from various agencies such as DP3A, the Education Office, the Health Office, and the Social Service, so that policy planning and evaluation can be carried out accurately and measurably. With a good data system, the government can map risks, prioritize interventions, and measure achievements between KLA clusters. In addition, the availability of disaggregated data also supports public transparency and policy accountability. The use of digital technology for children's data management will speed up the decision-making process and prevent overlapping programs between agencies.

3. Increasing children's participation in development planning

The principle of children's participation as affirmed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child places children as the subject of development, not just the object of policy. Therefore, the Bontang City Government needs to expand the forum for children's participation, such as the Children's Forum, the Children's Musrenbang, and the Children's Friends Information Center (PISA), which allows children to meaningfully convey their views, needs, and aspirations.

This participation must be inclusive, tiered, and sustainable, including children from various social backgrounds, including people with disabilities and children from poor families. Through this mechanism, public policies will be more responsive to the real needs of children. In addition, the involvement of children from the planning

stage to evaluation will foster a *sense of ownership* of development programs and strengthen participatory democratic values at the local level.

These measures are in line with the view [39], who affirm that effective implementation requires clarity of objectives, adequate resources, and political and social support from various stakeholders.

**Table 3.** Policy Analysis to Strengthen the Implementation of Child-Friendly Cities in Bontang City

| Not. | Main Problems                                                                                                                                                          | Strengthening Strategies/Efforts                                                                                                                                              | Expected Goals                                                                                                                               | Success Indicators                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | Weak coordination between regional apparatus in the implementation of the KLA program; The KLA Task Force does not yet have a strong legal mandate and work structure. | Institutional strengthening of the KLA Task Force through mayoral regulations or regional head decrees that stipulate structures, duties, and cross-sectoral work mechanisms. | Realizing effective coordination between government agencies, the business world, the community, and the media in the implementation of KLA. | The issuance of regulations or decrees to strengthen the KLA Task Force. Cross-sector coordination meetings are held regularly.<br>- The KLA program is run by cross-sectors, not just DP3A.                                                                       |
| 2    | Human resources at the village, school, and community levels have not understood the concept of child protection and the mainstreaming of children's rights.           | Increasing the capacity of implementing human resources through technical training and certification on child protection, case handling, and KLA.                             | Improving the competence and collective awareness of policy implementers to be responsive to children's issues.                              | The number of officials, teachers, and community cadres who participated in the training increased. The formation of a child protection implementation team at the village/school level.<br>- Decrease in the number of unhandled cases due to a lack of capacity. |

| Not. | Main Problems                                                                                                                         | Strengthening Strategies/Efforts                                                                                                                                                  | Expected Goals                                                                                                                                                     | Success Indicators                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3    | The unavailability of disaggregated data on children between agencies causes policies to be evidence-based and difficult to evaluate. | The development of an integrated children's information system with disaggregated data (age, gender, disability, socio-economic status) between regional apparatus organizations. | Provide an accurate database for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of <i>evidence-based policies</i> .                                                  | The Construction of the Integrated Child Information System (SIAT) in Bontang City. The availability of data is disaggregated between agencies periodically. KLA policy is based on quantitative and qualitative data. |
| 4    | Children's participation in the development planning process is still symbolic and unsustainable.                                     | Increase children's participation in official forums such as Children's Forum, Children's Musrenbang, and Children's Friends Information Center (PISA).                           | Providing meaningful participation space for children in the decision-making process according to the principles of <i>children's participation</i> (UNCRC, 1989). | Children's Forum and Children's Musrenbang are active in all villages. Children's input is accommodated in regional planning documents (RKPD, RPJMD). Increasing children's perception of their role in public policy. |

The table above illustrates the logical relationship between implementation problems, reinforcement strategies, and expected outcomes. Furthermore, this Regional Regulation has a strategic role in answering the dynamics of industrialization that is happening in Bontang. Massive industrialization demands

laws that are responsive to social, economic, and environmental changes. This is in line with the Progressive Legal Theory, who saw law as a *tool of social engineering*. Thus, the Child-Friendly City Regulation can be seen as an effort to organize the impact of industrialization so that it remains in the best interests of children.

In the context of sustainable development, the presence of this Regional Regulation is a balance between the interests of economic growth and socio-ecological sustainability. Children are placed as the center of attention, not just the object of development. This is in line with Gro Harlem Brundtland's Sustainable Development Theory [39], which emphasizes the integration of economic, social, and environmental aspects for the sustainability of future generations. By including environmental issues and children's rights, Bontang ensures the sustainability of children's quality of life in the future.

More importantly, this Regional Regulation can strengthen the legitimacy of local governments in carrying out their constitutional mandate and national laws and regulations related to child protection [39][40]. Consistent implementation will increase public trust in the state, as well as show that local governments are able to implement the principles of Good Governance: accountability, participation, transparency, and effectiveness. Thus, Regional Regulations are not only of administrative value, but also strengthen democratic governance.

In the end, the Child-Friendly City Regulation in Bontang is not just a static legal instrument, but can be a moral and political foundation for the realization of the next generation of the nation that is healthy, intelligent, and characterful. The fulfillment of children's rights to education, health, a decent environment, and protection from violence reflects the principles of the Social Rights of Citizens. By placing children as the subjects of development, Bontang not only builds the present but also prepares for a just and sustainable future for Indonesia.

Overall, the implementation of child protection policies in Bontang City shows the commitment of the local government to realize a Child-Friendly City, but it is still faced with structural and coordinating challenges. By strengthening inter-stakeholder synergy, increasing resource capacity, and ensuring children's involvement in every policy stage, Bontang has the potential to achieve a more comprehensive and sustainable implementation of KLA.

## 4 Conclusion

The implementation of Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2017 in Bontang City shows the gap between administrative achievements and substantive protection of children. Administrative successes have not been accompanied by a decrease in violence and child exploitation. The main obstacles lie in weak cross-sector coordination, lack of evaluation, and a lack of environmental protection. For this reason, policy revision is needed by emphasizing the integration of industrial CSR, the establishment of independent monitoring institutions, the strengthening of special protections, and the

participation of children in regional planning. With this step, Bontang can transform into a truly child-friendly and sustainable industrial city.

From the perspective of legal and social theory, these weaknesses suggest that such regulations serve largely as *a tool of legitimacy* rather than *a tool of social engineering*. To achieve true child protection, the regulation should be revised to ensure stronger integration of corporate social responsibility, independent monitoring bodies, environmental protection, responsive protection mechanisms, and meaningful child participation. Such reforms, which are based on the principles of human rights, sustainable development, and good governance, will enable Bontang to evolve from a city recognized for administrative achievements to a truly child-friendly city that guarantees the rights, safety, and well-being of future generations.

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