

Summary of Research Findings

Investigating the participation of children on the autism spectrum across home, school, and community: A longitudinal study.

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Overview

- We asked caregivers to rate their children's participation in activities across home, school, and the community.
- We found over a 3-year period there was a decrease in the frequency of participation in physical activities and a change in participation in the type of socialising activities.
- Identifying areas of

Why did we do this study?

Research has found children on the autism spectrum participate in less activities than their peers. Little is known about their participation over time. By following the same group of children over a period of time provides the opportunity to explore changes in participation due to age.

What did we do?

- We asked caregivers of children on the autism spectrum (aged 9 – 10 years) to complete the Participation and Environment Measure for Children and Youth. This questionnaire reports on how frequent children do activities and their involvement in activities in the home, school, and community.
- Caregivers were part of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Students with Autism and completed this questionnaire annually.
- We examined responses across a three-year period.

What did we find?

- Overall children were reported to have low levels of participation in organised social activities i.e. organisations, clubs and groups.
- Children rarely participated in special roles at school and school teams, clubs and organisations.
- Over the three years there was an increase in children's participation in "overnight visits or trips" and "socialising using technology"
- There was a decrease in number of children who participated in organised physical activities in the community across the three-year period.

What does this mean?

- We need to gather information from the children themselves about how they view their participation.
- We need to explore factors which may be supporting or hindering children's participation.
- This will help us target support for areas of participation that are meaningful for children on the autism spectrum.

Where are we sharing this study?

This research has been published in the *Child: Care, Health and Development* and is available by putting "<https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12679>" into google.