

Summary of Research Findings

How do teachers support their students on the autism spectrum in Australian Primary Schools?

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Overview

- We asked teachers to report on the modifications, accommodations and adjustments used to support students on the autism spectrum in Australian classrooms.
- Teachers also rated the importance of factors used to determine the grades of students with and without autism.
- The frequency of engagement with instructional materials were compared for students with and without autism.
- It is important to understand how different factors may support and hinder academic skills to better support academic achievement in children on the autism spectrum.

Why did we do this study?

- It is important to understand how students on the autism spectrum participate in and are supported within their classroom environments, as this has implications for their learning and academic outcomes.

What did we do?

- Teachers who had a student on the autism spectrum in the LASA project were invited to participate in this project.
- Eighty-seven teachers report on the supports, accommodations and additional assistance provided to students. Teachers also compared the frequency of class engagement and methods of evaluating outcomes and engagement with instructional materials of students with and without autism.

What did we find?

- On average, four of 10 possible types of additional assistance were being used by teachers to support students on the autism spectrum.
- Use of visual schedules and assistance from a teacher aide were the most common supports for students on the spectrum. Visual supports were also the most common whole class support found to benefit all students.
- Children on the spectrum engaged most with individual instructions from a teacher rather than whole class instruction.
- Teachers endorsed different factors as important when determining the grades of students with and without autism.

What does this mean?

- Teachers are working hard to support the diverse learning needs of students on the autism spectrum in their classrooms.
- This study provides important information on how students on the autism spectrum engage with a range of instructional materials, and how teachers evaluate the learning outcomes of students with and without autism.
- Differences in the engagement of students on the autism spectrum compared to their classmates will help to inform educational planning and delivery of curriculum content.

Where are we sharing this study?

This research has been published in the *Journal of Special Education Needs* and is available by putting <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12464>