

# Teaching children with autism spectrum disorder

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When I look into the future, the profession I see myself doing is being an educator. More specifically a Kindergarten school teacher. Being a teacher for young kids is something I have always wanted to do. I love kids, the amount of energy they have, how cute they are, and their innocence. Most importantly, kindergarten is of the utmost importance when it comes to children's education, and their future. Kids are the future of our nation and our world. Being able to teach them, prepare them, and set them up for a good future, is what makes me really want to be a teacher. Early schooling is very important to child development, and to the success of the child's future. This is why it is very important to know how to teach, deal with, and overall connect with children as a teacher, especially with children who have psychological disorders, like autism spectrum disorder.

There are many people in the world that think that early on schooling, is a waste of time and money (Chetty et al., 2010). They believe kindergarten effects tends to fade around junior high or high School. However, most studies that side with this claim are based mainly on test scores only. Dr. Chetty, a Harvard economist professor, analyzed the adult lives of almost 12, 000 children, who are now around 30 years old (Chetty et al., 2010). When Mr. Chetty looked at the students now in adulthood, he discovered that students who had learned much more in kindergarten were more likely to go to college than students with otherwise similar backgrounds (Chetty et al., 2010). Students who learned more were also more to marry. Also, as adults they were more likely to have more money saved. Over time, the effect seems to grow, too (Chetty et al., 2010). Based on this study, one can see that good early on education can impart skills that last a lifetime. Therefore,

early education is very important for all children, especially children with autism. This is why it is important for teachers in early schooling to be able to fully understand and work with children who have Autism.

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by patterns of repetitive behavior and difficulties with social skills, speech, and nonverbal communication. Many people with autism also have sensory issues (Bosl, Tager-Flusberg, Nelson, 2018). Autism affects an estimated 1 in 59 children in America. The symptoms are present in children as young as 2 years old, but it is often diagnosed much later. ASD affects daily functioning, especially learning and school-based behavior (Bosl, Tager-Flusberg, Nelson, 2018).

As stated, children with Autism Spectrum Disorder often struggle with communication, social situations, anxiety and other behaviors. Even so, children with ASD can really excel in a school setting, allowing them to gain enough knowledge and social skills to get into college and secure jobs (Marsh, Spagnol, Grove, Eapen, 2017). The Australian Autism Educational Needs Analysis (2016) found that among the 934 parents who were surveyed, approximately 77% had children on the spectrum attending public schools. It's very important to teach kids with autism social skills. Classrooms provide the perfect setting for teaching and practicing these skills (Fleming, 2014). As stated earlier, early schooling goes beyond normal school education like math and science. Early on schools are where children learn how to deal with difficult situations, communicate with other people, interact in different social situations, and where success for the future begins (Marsh, Spagnol, Grove, Eapen, 2017). However, classrooms are social environments <https://assignbuster.com/teaching-children-with-autism-spectrum-disorder/>

that focus on interaction, socialization and communication with others. This can cause stress, anxiety and depression in students that are on the spectrum (Saggers et al., 2016). This is why it is very important for teachers to be able to understand what ASD is, and what to do for their students who have it. Because without this understanding, teachers could actually do the exact opposite of what they are trying to do.

Teachers with students who have Autism Spectrum Disorder, need to have a good understanding of spectrum itself and how it may affect learning. The term “ spectrum” refers to the wide range of symptoms, skills, and levels of disability in functioning that can occur in people with ASD. Some children with ASD can perform all activities of daily living without any help, while others require help and substantially more support and structure to perform basic activities (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, 2015; Fleming, 2014). Knowing how to better teach, connect, and understand students is very important in early schooling. Especially with students who are on the spectrum. Teachers with ASD students, need to make sure that the learning environment and lesson plans are structured in a manner that tells students exactly what will happen, for how long, and what will be next (Saggers et al., 2016). Children with autism feel comfortable when they have a routine with clear structures, and when the routine doesn't change (Fleming, 2016). It is important for teachers to understand this, and to understand if that routine changes it can cause a lot of trouble for the child. Some children may even have emotional outbursts (Shanahan, 2018). Teachers need to be able to understand this about their students with ASD, so they can be ready and be able to work with the child

to calm him or her down. Teachers can do this by helping them cope with change and transition by simply reminding them when a change was looming and working through that change with them (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, 2015; Saggars et al., 2016). Teachers also need to know how to be able to work with children with autism who are either over-sensitive or under-sensitive to stimuli. For instance, children on the spectrum may be bothered by smells, lighting, or even sounds. All these stimuli can lead to major distractions from learning, so teachers with ASD students need to be aware of potential distracting stimuli and try to avoid them as much as possible (Shanahan, 2018).

In teaching kids with autism spectrum disorder there are many things the teacher should know so they can easily connect, teach, and help the child to the best of their ability. However, the most important thing for a teacher to know in terms of the children they are teaching is identifying and assessing children with ASD (Bradshaw et al., 2009). According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (2015), early behavioral/educational interventions have been very successful in many children with ASD. This is one of the biggest reasons for why it's very important for teachers to be able to know and understand psychological disorders, like Autism spectrum disorder. Catching ASD early on can help stop more medical and behavioral conditions from forming (Soke et al., 2018). Early intervention for children with autism spectrum disorder is one of the most effective means of improving long-term social and academic outcomes (Bradshaw et al., 2009). Children who receive services during their preschool and kindergarten year are better prepared to face academic challenges and to continue cognitive

and social development (Shanahan, 2018; Soke et al., 2018). When a child is very young, early intervention and treatment can improve how a child learns and develops. Early intervention makes a very significant difference in the child's life. Behavioral intervention, such as applied behavior analysis, has been proven to improve learning, communication and social skills (Payakacht, Tilford, Kuhlthau, 2017). In these interventions, therapists use highly structured and skill-oriented training sessions to help children develop social and language skills, such as applied behavioral analysis, which encourages positive behaviors and discourages negative ones (Payakacht, Tilford, Kuhlthau, 2017; Bradshaw et al., 2009). With early intervention, kids who are on the spectrum have a good chance to go to college and have meaningful lives, and it all starts with a teacher who knows what to look for.

Being a childhood educator is a very important job. It allows children to develop in a good and safe environment as well as securing them a good future. Children learn a lot in early education, and it's even more important for children who have autism spectrum disorder. That is why it is very important for teachers, like kindergarten teachers, to be able to know as much as they can about ASD. With this knowledge teachers can identify students who are on the spectrum young and get them the help they need. These teachers also can make the classroom environment the best possible environment for these children, so they can develop and learn, at a much fast rate, while being as comfortable as possible. Overall, Teachers have to deal and understand a lot about psychology in general, to do their jobs effectivity. Knowing and understanding ASD is just one small part of the overall massive duties of being a good youth educator.

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