



# PROGRAM 2: THE SCHOOL YEARS

## EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

### AIM



The Autism CRC Australian Autism Educational Needs Analysis used a nationwide survey and follow-up interviews to obtain information about the educational needs of students on the autism spectrum (5-18 years) from four key stakeholder groups including educators, specialists, parents, and students on the autism spectrum (11-18 years).

### WHO TOOK PART?

 **1,468**  
people took part

 **248** educators

 **179** specialists

 **107** students  
on the autism spectrum  
(aged 11-18 years)

 **934** parents  
of a child on the autism spectrum  
(aged 5-18 years)

### HOW WE DID THE RESEARCH



**1,468** people did a nationwide online survey



**40** people took part in follow-up interviews or focus groups  
(educators, specialists, parents, students)

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Autism CRC and the research partners in this study sincerely thank the participants in this study for their time and their willingness to share their opinions and ideas. Without these contributions, this study would not have been possible.

### WHO WERE THE RESEARCHERS?



# WHAT PEOPLE TOLD US

## 1. NEEDS OF STUDENTS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

Participants identified the top five needs of students on the spectrum which had the most impact on their learning. These included:

- **Social emotional**
- **Behavioural**
- **Communication**
- **Sensory**
- **Academic and learning**

The top three highest rating sensory issues for students on the spectrum in educational settings which were identified as having the most impact in the school environment were:

- **Noise**
- **Touch**
- **The ability to stay still**

The top six comorbid conditions that had the most impact on students on the autism spectrum in educational settings included:

- **Anxiety disorder**
- **Learning difficulties**
- **Auditory processing disorder**
- **Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder**
- **Language disorder**
- **Intellectual impairment**

## 2. POSSIBLE BARRIERS TO SUPPORTING STUDENTS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

Educators, specialists and parents identified the top four barriers to support were lack of:

- **Funding**
- **Time**
- **Suitable education and training**
- **Specialist support**

## 3. SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH AUTISM IN THE CLASSROOM REQUIRES

- **Supporting the social emotional wellbeing of students on the spectrum.**
- **Providing positive behaviour support.**
- **Flexible and individually tailored programming and support.**
- **Educational approaches need to consider student preferences including:**
  - using technology to support academic and learning needs;
  - one-on-one support inside and outside the classroom (not necessarily a teacher aide);
  - support for executive function skills (e.g., planning, organisation, time management skills);
  - social aspects of schooling (e.g., working as part of a group, getting along with others, teasing and bullying);
  - staying calm and being able to access time away when it is needed;
  - addressing handwriting;
  - support for sensory needs; and,
  - support for times of transition or pending change.
- **Technology is an essential element of support.**
- **Support and enhance school connectedness.**
- **Consider the sensory aspects of the environment which may impact on learning,**
- **Support comorbid conditions experienced by students on the spectrum.**

## FIND OUT MORE

You can get the full report of this study and an executive summary via the Autism CRC Connect Hub at [autismcrc.com.au/needsanalysisreport](https://autismcrc.com.au/needsanalysisreport). You can contact the researchers about this study via the study's Project Leader:

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