



Introduction

The research was conducted through a T-K and Kindergarten classroom at Aloha Elementary Health Medical Academy, part of ABC Unified School District. The classroom consisted of 8 students, 7 boys and 1 girl. The children were taught and watched over by their primary teacher Mrs. Guevera and two paraeducators daily. A questionnaire was conducted for the parents to fill out but due to the current global Pandemic, the responses were limited. "Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) refers to a neurodevelopmental disorder that is characterized by difficulties with social communication and social interaction and restricted and repetitive patterns in behaviors, interests, and activities" (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Children on the spectrum may have difficulty interacting with peers in school or can act out in the school setting. Each child on the spectrum expresses it differently, depending on how far or low they are on the spectrum. Their progress can advance throughout the years, depending on parents, school, and their various amounts of therapists. Parental involvement is an influential factor in the behavior of children on the spectrum. Their reinforcement for progress, the slightest involvement, whether it is showing them books, creating a routine at home or simply being patient can go a long way in their child's development. The purpose of our research study was to see if the involvement of parents with children on the Autism Spectrum related to their behavior in a school setting.

Hypotheses

It was hypothesized that the parents' involvement in the children would affect the children's behavior in school

Method

Participants

The involvement and behavior were measured through the combination of parents and their children. The participants in the research study involved children on the spectrum and their parents. There were a total of 8 students, the majority of the children in the study were male ($n = 7$), with only one being female ($n = 1$). Of the participants that were parents, 1 involved a child with one parent, while 7 involved children with both parents.

Measures

For our research the questionnaire was distributed to the parents and teachers of the eight children. The Parent Involvement Questionnaire (*Parent Involvement Questionnaire, 2017*) was made up of 15 multiple choice questions, 5 general questions, and 62 scaling questions to measure parental involvement. The questionnaire measured the three variables Capabilities, Willingness, and Responsibilities.

Procedure

The questionnaire was emailed to the parents for them to fill out based on what they do at home, outside of school. Parents of the children observed and participated alone by the completion of the questionnaire. Participants were informed of a consent form before starting the questionnaire, in which it was sent via email. The children were never asked to act differently or do anything out of their day-to-day routine, we did not want to jeopardize the naturalistic form of our observations.

Results

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Parental Involvement

	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
CAPABILITIES	6	3.70	4.00	3.92	.054
WILLINGNESS	6	2.80	4.00	3.62	.19
RESPONSIBILITIES	6	3.30	4.00	3.67	.13
Valid <i>N</i> (listwise)	6				

Note. There was not a significant difference in the categories of Parental Involvement.

Table 2

Pearson Correlation of Relationship between Capabilities, Willingness, and Responsibilities

		CAPABILITIES	WILLINGNESS	RESPONSIBILITIES
CAPABILITIES	Pearson Correlation	1	.470	-.082
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.347	.878
	<i>N</i>	6	6	6
WILLINGNESS	Pearson Correlation	-.470	1	.607
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.347		.202
	<i>N</i>	6	6	6
RESPONSIBILITIES	Pearson Correlation	-.082	.607	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.878	.202	
	<i>N</i>	6	6	6

Note. Capabilities, Willingness, and Responsibilities.

Although the results and research was hindered because of the closing of the schools due to the global pandemic, the results were limited and only a few observations and data were collected. But they still lead and confirm our hypothesis; parent involvement does affect the behavior of an ASD child. The reinforcement and parenting done by the child's caregiver plays an important role in their school life; behavior, their involvement, academic advancements and routine.

Discussion

Our study explored the influences of parental involvement in children with ASD. It focused on children ages 5-6 years old; Mixture of pre-K and kindergarten at Aloha Elementary school. If conclusions were made about the partial results the data would suggest that there was a relationship between parental involvement and the behavior of the children that were observed; similar to the correlation in the work of Sharabi and Maron-Golon, (2018). It showed if parents were consistent with their positive reinforcement and care in the progress of their children the students performed better in their school activities. The results of our study have consistent results with most of the results of other research studies.

Limitations

A limitation of the study includes the completion of our research study. Due to COVID-19 we weren't allowed to finish our observations because we had to follow social distancing. We got the observations based on what one of the team members got. We then had to continue with our research remotely. Another limitation includes the level on the spectrum of each child that was at.

Implications

Our research study can apply to the study of the development of children on the spectrum; and raises questions about parental involvement being a predictor of a child's behavior in school. The variables capabilities, willingness, and responsibilities are applied as a measurement for parental involvement. For any future research the work should assess the behavior of the children from a larger scope and should clarify the extent of the variables.

References

- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition: DSM-5. Washington, DC: Publisher.
- Sharabi, A., & Marom-Golan, D. (2018). Social Support, Education Levels, and Parents' Involvement: A Comparison Between Mothers and Fathers of Young Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 38*(1), 54-64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0271121418762511>