

The Efficacy of Models for Educational Service Delivery for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

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Aim: To investigate the Autism SA and Aspect models for supporting students with ASD in mainstream schools.

- How do the educational outcomes compare?
- What helps and hinders?

Aspect model in NSW

- Enrol in satellite class
- Prepare for transition to a mainstream class
- Transition with support

Autism SA model in SA

- Enrol in mainstream class
- Support on demand

Who was involved?

- 85 students with ASD
- Their parents, teachers, school principals and their school friends

What was information collected about?

- Continuity of placement
- Social behavior
- Engagement and adjustment at school
- Parent, teacher, and principal perceptions of success at school and reasons for it
- Friendships
- Parent, teacher, and principal satisfaction with service delivery by Aspect or Autism SA

How was information collected?

- Interviews with parents, teachers, principals, child and friends
- Rating scales completed by parents, teachers and principals
- Playground observations

What did we find?

- High continuity of school placement in both states
- Thirteen NSW children moved to mainstream classes, less than expected
- Similar outcomes in both support models for school engagement, adjustment and social skills
- Ratings of success of placement were very high in both models
- NSW parents thought their child's placement was more successful than SA parents
- Children with good adaptive behavior were more successful
- Children with problem behaviour were less successful
- Parents and principals were more satisfied with Aspect support than SA parents and principals were with Autism SA support
- Most people thought a teacher's skills and practices were the biggest help to successful inclusion of their child
- Most people thought child characteristics were biggest barrier to successful inclusion

Conclusions

- Overall, it appears that both models were successful in terms of continuity and success of placement
- Some refinements should be considered for each of the models
- Aspect may need to make the criteria for moving into a mainstream class more clear
- Autism SA may need to remind parents, teachers and principals that the school can request support if needed