A Study of Children with Autism in Illinois General Education Elementary School Classrooms

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A Study of Children With Autism in Illinois General Education Elementary School Classrooms

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to gather survey-based information from parents of children with autism who are currently in elementary schools in Illinois to determine whether or not their children are receiving the needs they should get. The parents are asked about their perceptions as to whether or not their children are getting the necessary help with educational, stimulatory, and sensory needs. The survey’s response, though limited, found that while accommodations and support for children with autism have improved in the past 20 years, the matter of addressing maladaptive behaviors may still need some work. This shows that while progress has been made, there is still education the teachers in elementary schools will need regarding students with autism.

Introduction

Autism is still a heavily researched topic. Not everything is known about it or how it presents in every individual affected by it. The most volatile and telltale effects of it appear in childhood, where the child finds themselves in a world that is strange and scary. Because of their struggle to understand the very nature of social interaction, they wander aimlessly and helplessly, feeling misunderstood and alone. And then, you thrust that child into a public classroom, where social interaction is forced upon them and they don’t know how to interact. They may fear being ostracized, be afraid of messing up in some way, and suffer multiple sensory overload. This is where meltdowns may start and teachers either will be confused as to how to deal with it or seek to punish the child for something they cannot control. This has led me to the question, how many kids experienced this back then in Illinois and does it still happen today?
This research project focuses on whether or not children with autism in Illinois elementary school general education classrooms deal with struggles today that children endured 20 years ago. The research aims to find out if the accommodations and support for children with autism have improved in Illinois, using a survey to gather responses from parents of present-day children with autism attending these elementary schools. The literature review conducted focuses on strategies for addressing the behaviors of children with autism on a national scale and how these strategies could be useful in classrooms today.

**Literature Review**

Every school in the country, not just Illinois, has different levels of standards and preparations when it comes to serving their students of all ages and circumstances. For that reason, some are more equipped to nurture students with autism than others. This is somewhat problematic because if a child with autism finds themselves in a poorly equipped district, the consequences could be disastrous for both that child and the district’s reputation. That’s why it is important to get the point of view of the teachers especially, so that the process of preparing to support children with autism that may be incoming to the school can begin. There is also the topic of inclusive classrooms. This ties into the preparedness of each individual school district. What does it take to prepare school districts to introduce and maintain these kinds of classrooms effectively? How big of a challenge does such an endeavor present? And, assuming you can successfully implement inclusive classrooms, how can you mold the teachers’ attitudes towards teaching children with autism to better educate and prepare them for the real world?

**Inclusive Classrooms and the Challenges Involved**

Inclusive classrooms are classrooms that house typically developing or “neurotypical” children in the same room as special needs children where they can interact with and learn
together under the same curriculum. This creates a mix of learning opportunities and challenges. For children with autism, who struggle with social cues and customs, the curriculum can be morphed to better fill in the gaps in their social knowledge and allow them to forge relationships with neurotypical children in a productive and nurturing way. If you think about how children are often divided into special needs and general education classrooms, that separation takes away from a child with autism being able to learn vital skills that will better serve them in the future.

Teachers need to be onboard with creating and maintaining the structure of an inclusive classroom. However, Public Law 94-142 guaranteeing the right to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment is causing special education students to be sent into inclusive general education classrooms (Eichinger et al., 1991). Research has shown that general education teachers do not feel prepared to implement social interventions for children with autism (Able et al., 2015). Furthermore, they don’t support an inclusive classroom because they don’t have the training necessary for conducting and maintaining an inclusive classroom. They also report low confidence and self-efficacy for teaching special education students (McCray & McHatton, 2011). These problems can stem from the district administration in that the knowledge of special needs children and children with autism is low and there’s no drive to seek the information to move towards a more inclusive environment and education for these disadvantaged children. There may also be pushback to the idea of change because the district may believe that their current way has worked all along and that there isn’t reason for change. This mindset can really demoralize the teachers and staff in the classroom.

Teachers not only lack the confidence to teach in an inclusive classroom, but they feel that they don’t have adequate support within their schools to undertake such an endeavor (Ross-Hill, 2009). Research of teachers has shown that while teachers lack the confidence to teach
special needs children, they do have the desire to collaborate and make such an endeavor possible (Able et al., 2015). One of the biggest issues that educators cite when it comes to the challenge of educating students with autism is the diversity of these children who are diagnosed with autism. This is a very valid point because just like every child born throughout time is different, so is every child on the autism spectrum.

Autism is defined as a spectrum because each child born with autism has it to varying degrees of severity. Some are barely hindered socially by it and can adapt and learn about social cues, while others are completely nonverbal and require assisted living to do basic everyday care. High-functioning autism and Asperger’s syndrome, also known as level 1 autism, often feature some social impairments such as difficulty empathizing with others. People with low-function or level 3 autism are among the most severely affected by autism. These people are often the ones who experience significant challenges in social communication, extreme difficulty coping with change, as well as other behaviors that severely impede their ability to function (Rudy, L. J., 2023). This makes day-to-day tasks very hard for them to complete and often requires the assistance of an aid. There is also the issue of sensory challenges that differ with each autistic person. One person may hate any sort of loud noise, whereas others crave loud, ear-piercing sound. The same goes for touch, sight, taste, and smell. These senses can help or hinder the individual in different situations. All of the things to know about the diversity of the autism spectrum is something that is daunting to grasp.

Because of this seemingly expanding knowledge of the diverse spectrum of children with autism, it makes teachers hesitant to teach these children as they’re not sure they’ll be able to effectively meet the needs of each child. There is perhaps the fear that the child will have a meltdown and the teacher will lock up and not know how to soothe the child and maintain the
classroom environment at the same time and then the parents will find out and look for someone to blame for the child’s meltdown. There’s the fear of failure to do their job as an educator and public servant. There are so many “what if’s” that may plague a teacher’s conscience that make them afraid to take on such a herculean task.

Studies have shown that teachers’ perceptions of autism and inclusion are often based on their past or present experience of children with autism and their own training and perceived teaching efficacy (Bolourian et al., 2022). This is very important because experiences are often what drive us to either accept new challenges or completely reject them. If someone has a negative experience with a child with autism or any age, for that matter, then it can create a negative impression of all people with autism and set it in that person’s mind that they don’t want to be near anyone in that group. On top of this, some educators also have misconceptions about ASD (Segall & Campbell, 2012). Unless that person is willing to learn and grow from that negative experience, this can prove to be very detrimental to an educator who is being faced with the prospect of an inclusive classroom.

**Inclusive Practices**

Children with autism have often basic needs, and these needs, if not accommodated, can cause regulation issues for these children and lead to more dramatic events, such as meltdowns. However, these accommodations are not hard to satisfy and can allow these children to thrive in the classroom. An example is routine and structure. If the child in question is given a schedule ahead of time of how things are going to go, down to the times and dates, this can decrease the anxiety in a child with autism. The predictability of a classroom day can alleviate all of the child’s worries and allow them to focus on the important things of the day, such as the learning.
However, unplanned fluctuations in the day of a child with autism can cause dysregulation and lead to a meltdown if the child isn’t steered back on track after a fluctuation.

Other strategies involve having physical space for movement. There are IEP plans that allow for the child in question to stand up in the classroom and move around during lecture if they need to let off steam or anxiety and for some children, this is a must. This is because to sit still for a child with autism is an unbearable ask, depending on the child. They need to release that energy and stimulate themselves somehow, and that stimulation comes through movement. Forcing the child to remain seated can lead to catastrophic thinking, which then becomes a meltdown. This accommodation is put in place to prevent a meltdown and allow the least distracting option to be utilized.

Deliberate seating arrangements, usually at the front and close to the teacher, provide much-needed security for a child with autism. If the child involved is not near the teacher, that is a source of anxiety that impedes the learning process and can create a chain reaction leading to meltdowns. One thing a child with autism needs is a lifeline, someone they can trust to be there for them in order to feel safe in the environment they’re in. In the classroom, that person is the teacher. If the child doesn’t have that lifeline, they have no security in their world and will start to head towards a meltdown. Thus, keeping a teacher nearby is paramount to an autistic child’s world.

It is possible to integrate into the curriculum a section on how to effectively communicate with peers, which is imperative for children with autism to learn. Research was done on how to guide children with autism on responding and initiating with on-topic answers rather than off-topic answers through a social intervention called “Social Stations” (Sutton et al., 2022). The research consisted of two interventions where a student with autism and a neurotypical child
picked 3 books and moved to the Social Station. The first intervention involved the use of the *Puppet Pals* app while the students conversed about the 3 books, and then the second intervention did not include the *Puppet Pals* app. The results supported the idea that social communication interventions could be integrated into inclusive school curriculum, which is monumental for the education of both neurotypical children and their autistic peers. However, because of severe language disorders that often present in children with autism, speech pathologists in elementary schools need to do more than just standardized testing to appraise the frequency of verbal initiations and responses of all children with autism in their schools (Sutton et al., 2022). As each child with autism is different from the next, every single child has their strengths and weaknesses.

**Accommodations and Services**

Wei et al. (2014) found that the needs of children with autism differs with the age of the child. For instance, preschool children with autism received more intensive services than children with other kinds of disabilities (Bitterman et al., 2008). This could be because preschool children are at one of the earliest stages of development at which they are just starting to learn about the world they live in, but their autism impedes them from understanding the social aspect of the world. If you combine that with a constant need for regulation, it’s going to be extremely hard to help a child cope and remain calm. Thus, more services are needed at the earliest stages.

For elementary school-age students with autism, services often involve speech/language therapy, behavior management programs, and occupational therapy (Wei et al., 2014). These kinds of services appear more in the elementary school phase than the preschool phase as these children are developing more and learning more about themselves and their bodies. Many
children with autism experience speech delays, and speech therapy is rendered in preschool, elementary, and secondary school settings (Bitterman et al., 2008; Green et al., 2006; Goin-Kochel et al., 2007). The child is at the stage where their brains are able to take in new knowledge and experiences more than later stages in life, and thus for speech-delayed children, this is the best time to help them with their speech.

IEPs are often a lifeline for children with autism, as they outline what a child needs to be successful in the classroom. Earlier in the literature review, the accommodation of being able to stand up and move about the classroom was mentioned. This is something that allows the child to regulate as needed, and other accommodations such as sitting at the front of the room and separate testing areas are common in IEPs as well. IEPs are most often utilized in the earlier schools, such as elementary schools because that’s when the children are most scattered. Research has found that the need for IEP services for children with autism declined as the children aged (Wei et al., 2014).

Wei et al. (2014) also found that those children with more severe autism in the areas of understanding verbal/nonverbal communication had lower odds of receiving mental health services, while those with more severe health problems had lower odds of receiving communication services. This could be because the services that are the most severe are seen as needing the most attention, thus the resources at hand are focused on what is deemed the most necessary need. For the areas of communication, mental health challenges are harder to diagnose when the child can’t speak or communicate their thoughts effectively. Thus, it is imperative that the child learn to communicate their thoughts in some way, whether it be verbally or through something like sign language. If someone has greater health problems than communication struggles, than efforts are going to be focused on making life easier for the person rather than
helping them voice or communicate for thoughts. Resources tend to be expended on what is the most severe to help the person maintain their life.

**Teachers’ Attitudes**

Teachers not only must be effective as educators, but must also be positive in their attitudes towards the potential for students with disabilities to succeed (D’Alonzo, 1983). Research involving teachers, as noted previously in the review, has concluded that many teachers have various reservations about teaching students with any kind of disability. Schultz et al. (1991) found that teachers’ views of students are a strong force in determining how the interaction between teachers and students will go, which in turn affects students’ achievements. This could be interpreted as a domino effect, where if a teacher initiates and keeps a positive relationship with a child with autism, that will help the child feel more confident in their abilities and grow in a nurturing manner, which will allow them to achieve academically. However, if the instructor gives off a negative aura and treats the student poorly, this will affect their ability to perform and grow. Behaviors in teachers will influence behaviors in their students.

Teachers’ negative attitudes around the subject of teaching children with disabilities is not always directed at the child. It’s often directed at themselves as they do not feel qualified to teach these students. A study conducted by Barned et al. (2011) found that the 15 teachers surveyed had a lack of knowledge regarding the autism spectrum and had various misconceptions about the condition and the needs of these students in inclusive classrooms. To relate back to the possibility of a teacher displaying negative attitudes towards a student with autism, it can be asserted that reasons such as not knowing anything about autism or how to help the child, which leads the instructor to be afraid to engage them for fear of doing something wrong. What the study by Barned et al. (2011) indicated was that the programs mean to prepare
teachers for inclusive classrooms needed to be expanded to deliver more knowledge about autism as well as foster more inclusive attitudes towards these students. Research suggests that programs including specific interventions can students with ASD will likely increase teachers’ self-efficacy (Siu & Ho, 2010).

Attitudes are something that can be trained and programs meant to educate and shape attitudes can prepare instructors for working with these children. Many educators have expressed insecurities about teaching children with autism because they feel inadequate regarding their university education and training (Roberts and Webster, 2022). The fear of the unknown often dissuades teachers from seeking the resources necessary to better themselves and help diverse populations of students. That’s where autism-centered preparatory programs could help. Training is always necessary before taking on a new endeavor, and that includes attitudes and knowledge about the subject.

Teachers often start their careers with little to no training in the field of autism or ASD (autism spectrum disorder) (Morton and Campbell, 2008; Barned et al., 2011, Busby et al., 2012). This can create a negative attitude towards the idea of teaching a child with autism because of being ill-equipped to do so (Suhrheinrich, 2011). Because universities and school districts often don’t prioritize autism or any kind of disorder in both degrees and job training, this leads to issues regarding the teacher’s ability to teach neurodivergent children. Programs should be started and expanded in all school districts, focusing on educating staff and administration on the nature of autism and how to educate these children. There needs to be particular focus on the attitudes towards and about children with autism so that the relationships formed and teaching conveyed can create a nurturing, constructive environment for autistic children instead of an anxious, adversarial environment.
Conclusion

Before interventions can be successfully administered and implemented, the issue of education on the part of the teachers and staff must be addressed. Studies have shown that over the decades, autism has become more and more prevalent, but the drive to imbue teachers with the skills and resources they need to educate and nurture these children has been stagnant. Teachers are left feeling lost and ill-advised on their ability to teach these children and do it in an effective, positive manner. In the elementary school years, this kind of education is paramount to the success of children with autism because this is the time in life where they’re building support systems, learning strategies to cope, and discerning their strengths and weaknesses. A lack of proper education and accommodation in this stage of life can set a child with autism up for failure as they continue with life.

Although there are many districts who have great track records of educating and preparing students with autism for the real world, this is not a universal trait. Poorer school systems often lack the resources to educate their staff on the issue of autism and thus that leaves their autistic students in an environment where they may have to fend for themselves in a world they do not understand, and that is a very frightening scenario for a child with autism. Research has shown that teachers across the United States feel that they don’t have the resources or skills to adequately teach a child with autism, and that’s something that needs to change. It should become common practice that educational degrees in university include courses on autism and how to both recognize and implement interventions in a student with autism. This can help to solve the crisis of the lack of knowledge teachers have regarding the autism spectrum.
However, as autism has become more and more prevalent, so has the drive of teachers to learn more about it. In a world where more and more people are being diagnosed and treated for autism, teachers need to be ready to educate and prepare these students for the rest of their lives. Some teachers may feel helpless about the prospect and learning to prepare for educating children with autism, there are avenues to get the resources, and the government and universities alike can provide these resources to train old and new generations for these students.

**Purpose of the Study**

To determine whether the staff at elementary schools in Illinois are treating children with autism with compassion and care or not, we must learn from the parents what they have seen from the teachers regarding their children’s behavior and how the teachers and staff themselves manage it. The present study is part of a capstone project for the university, approved by the IRB of NIU, aimed at starting research towards presenting better knowledge of current school practices regarding how children with autism are treated and educated in Illinois elementary schools (Kindergarten through 5th grade). This study is conducted through both a literature review to research what the past couple decades have impacted as far as treatment of elementary school children with autism, and a survey for parents to gather and measure present-day data regarding whether parents feel their children are being educated and cared for proper in Illinois elementary schools today. The research seeks the answers to: (a) do children with autism get the needs met that they should receive in Illinois elementary schools today, (b) do these children get their educational, stimulatory, and sensory needs met, and (c) has anything changed in regard to care for these children in the past 20 years? The findings from this study were compared to the research on literature to be presented at an NIU event at the end of the semester.
Method

A satisfaction survey was produced in order to better understand the perspective of parents in regard to the accommodations and care their children with autism receive in Illinois elementary schools today. This survey featured multiple-choice, matrices and short-answer questions in order to better discern the data and gain various responses. The goal was to determine from the parents’ point of view whether or not they perceive the care their children with autism are getting is better today than it was in the past 20 years.

Research Design

This study was a mix of qualitative and quantitative, in that the answers were meant to gain a variety of different answers and gain as many responses as possible to get a more accurate and meaningful answer to the study. The mix of these two measures allows for a more varied pool of responses, but also the possibility for many similar kinds of answers that can answer your questions in either a positive or negative fashion. The survey was created and modified over several weeks in the semester before the research. The choice was made to create a survey over reusing an existing one to better obtain the answers sought for this research.

Procedures

In order to get the study and survey approved, the materials necessary for the NIU IRB chapter needed to approved were created. This included the research questions, any possible conflicts of interest, potential participant demographic, and the recruitment procedures and informed consent.
Once the survey was approved, it was sent out via email to school districts over a period of 4 weeks in order to recruit parents who were eligible to participate in the survey to get a more varied response. The consent form was placed before the survey so that parents would understand the procedures and risks possible when taking the survey. The first question is a consent question, asking if the participant wishes to participate or not. Demographics and location were not recorded as part of the data. The survey was also sent out through NIU faculty who were willing to help, with them sending the link out through newsletters and social media. Social media groups concerning autism and autism support groups in Illinois specifically were located on Facebook and a recruitment post with the survey link was posted to each group at least once. These recruitment posts also included that the data was recorded anonymously.

The survey consisted of two parts. The first part was meant to determine if the participant was qualified to take part in the survey through various questions. To qualify, the parent must (a) be the parent of a child with autism, (b) have that child be a current elementary school student, (c) be in general education classes at least part of the day, (d) be in special education classes at least part of the day, and (e) have an IEP or Section 504 plan. The parents and child also had to reside in Illinois. If the participant answered no to any of these, they were excluded from the survey.

The second part focused on the quality of the child’s care in the elementary school setting. The first question asked parents to rate the school’s performance regarding their child’s care in various categories, ranging from “willingness to adapt to child’s needs” to “overall quality of education”. The scale ranged from “poor” to “outstanding”. The second question asks whether the parent has received communication from the staff regarding their child expressing maladaptive behaviors. The third question is for those who answered “yes” to the second
question, asking how often their child was reported for exhibiting maladaptive behaviors, with options ranging from “once a month” to “daily”. The last three questions were short-answer, asking what the staff say the misbehavior is specifically, what the cause of the behavior is, and then asking what the parent thinks the cause of the behavior is. The answers were then recorded and saved anonymously for the reviewer to analyze.

**Results**

The survey goal was 500 respondents, but due to the unique nature of the study and the specific requirements to participate, a total of 49 were recorded. After the first section of the survey which determined the qualifications of the participants, 14 of the 49 respondents remained for the second part of the survey. The responses, however, remained varied despite the small number of respondents. For the first question, the response “Acceptable” was consistently the highest-picked choice, with “Neutral” being the lowest-picked factor. “Outstanding” was often on par with “Below Average” in selection.

The first question generated an average from 1 to 5 on the rating by parents of school’s performance meeting their child’s needs. The first factor was “Willingness to adapt to child’s needs”, scoring 3.43 out of 5. The second factor, “Receptiveness to parental feedback” generated the highest average of the 5 factors, which was 3.50 out of 5. The third factor, “Overall Quality of Education”, scored 3.21 out of 5, slightly lower than the first two. The fourth factor, “Implementation of Accommodations/Supports” tied for highest score with the second factor, scoring 3.50 out of 5. The fifth and final factor was “Addressing maladaptive behaviors”, which scored the lowest of the 5 factors, measuring 2.64 out of 5.
The second question asked whether the parents received communication from school staff regarding their child displaying maladaptive behaviors. 12 of the 14 respondents answered “Yes”, with the remaining 2 saying “No”. The third question measured amount of occurrences of the children exhibiting maladaptive behavior as reported from teachers to their parents. The highest score was “Two or more times weekly”, with the lowest scores being “Once Weekly” and “Daily”. The number of respondents dropped to 10 with this question.

The final 3, the multiple-choice answers, finished with a total of 8 responses for all. For the first, regarding what the maladaptive behaviors are, the comments range from self-harm to verbal outbursts. There are a few which mention teachers mislabeling a child’s behavior and the parents attempting to explain to them what is really happening, and the teachers are not listening. At least one responded that the school does not communicate at all how their child is behaving and that they must read their child’s behavior themselves to find out the answers.

The second short-answer question is regarding what staff say is the cause of the maladaptive behaviors. One parent expressed that staff do not use any of the techniques the parent shares and wait for her to become fully dysregulated before intervening instead of preventing her from getting to that point. Another parent expressed that because of the school’s lack of communication and the child’s issue with their current teacher that they are trying to relocate the child to a different school. A third answer that stands out is the school not detailing the cause of the behavior in their communications.

The third question asks the parents themselves what they feel is causing their child to exhibit maladaptive behaviors. Some of the answers focus on the staff being poorly trained about handling their child, and others involve how their child reacts to certain situations. Two answers state that if their children are forced into a transition without forewarning, that causes
the maladaptive behavior. Another answer mentions the child’s need for sensory input before he can do schoolwork. These answers are where the responses were both varied and similar.

**Discussion**

While the answers were varied in a few respects, the limitations of the study were not expected to lead to so few responses recorded. The limitations started with the criteria for being able to take the survey. By restricting the survey to parents of a current elementary school child with autism in Illinois presented major challenges in finding the people who could respond to the survey. The emails were also sent out during some school districts’ Spring Break, which delayed the responses to the survey emails and thus caused there to be less time to distribute the surveys to parents. Some districts did express concern about not having enough time to distribute the survey. There were also some districts who did not have any children with autism in their districts. There may have also been reluctance on the part of staff to distribute the survey due to the content and reluctance on the part of the parents for the same reason. The general dismissal of surveys in general by the public also could have contributed to the low turnout. The study was something that has potential in being explored with a bigger sample size and better parameters for participation.

The results stating that being receptive to parental feedback and implementing accommodations was the highest average while the addressing of maladaptive behaviors being the lowest average was interesting to see. The reason for that is it may imply that while the accommodations to prevent maladaptive behaviors are easy to put in place, the teachers are still not trained in addressing maladaptive behaviors when they do happen. This can support data from the literature review, which reports that teachers often do not have the training to support and educate children with autism and are not comfortable with educating and bonding with these
kids, which may explain the low score when it come to addressing maladaptive behaviors. The teachers may feel safer when they implement the accommodations effectively but may feel defeated when the child exhibits behaviors that they don’t know how to handle.

The most-chosen answer for the first question being “Acceptable” is a disappointing result in that it implies that the school and staff are doing the bare minimum to meet their children’s needs instead of finding ways to benefit their growth and education. This is something that shows that not much growth has been done according to the parents who responded. However, because the sample size was so small, it is not truly indicative of the whole picture. A larger pool of respondents could further develop and justify this answer.

This survey could be modified and presented for future research with different requirements to participate in order to generate a more diversified and quality response. As this survey was brand-new, the ability to promote it was a hard task, with it ultimately generating much less of a response than desired. This survey was meant to add more data to the area of studying the children with autism in our public elementary schools.

**Conclusion**

While the study didn’t produce the amount of results hoped for, the data analysis could be used if a similar study were attempted in the future with different parameters and a bigger sample pool. If this data were to be used, it shows that while schools have made progress in some areas, mainly in implementing and accommodating the children with autism, there is still work that needs to be done. Teachers need to know how to address potential maladaptive behaviors should they come up in their interactions with these children. Not being able to address such behaviors can create a long-lasting issue that prevents the child from learning strategies that enable them to cope with their behaviors in the future and they may be apprehensive about trusting that teacher.
Training about autism and how it presents in children has become much more prevalent in current times due to the frequency of autism in our children today.

This research has shown that not only are teachers worried about teaching an inclusive classroom, but they don’t feel they have the resources to prepare for such an endeavor. So, what is the solution? It has to do with our laws, our curriculum, our degrees. Autism is still not being given the attention it needs in these fields, and our teachers are not being taught anything about it. This is a major issue because if they do not know how to communicate with a child with autism, this can create a bad impression on the teacher’s part in regards to how they treat children with autism in the future. Programs need to be implemented so that teachers better understand what it’s like being a child with autism and learn to respond with patience and compassion. These children can grow and live in the same world as neurotypical children and they need to be nurtured as well. If they can’t be treated like human beings, with kindness and compassion, they are being set up for failure. It appears that work still needs to be done in order to treat children with autism properly in elementary schools, but there is some progress that has been made, and that is a start.
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