

Title: Predicting Teachers' Perceptions of Upcoming School Transitions for Students with ASD

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Introduction Students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) make up the majority of students receiving special education (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). New school transitions (i.e., pre-school to kindergarten, elementary to middle school, and middle to high school transitions) are particularly worrisome for students with ASD, due to the associated disruption in routine and increased social and academic demands (Nuske et al., 2019). In order for sending teachers to better support students with ASD during transitions, it is important to first understand how teachers perceive the effectiveness of current transition practices and their students' transition success. This study aims to explore the teacher and child related factors that are predictive of sending teachers' perceptions regarding their students' upcoming transition.

Method: Data was collected at four sites in the surrounding areas of Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Rochester, and Sacramento. Sending teachers (n=126) were surveyed regarding their perception of their students' transitions, burnout, network support and children's classroom behavior. Descriptive analyses were conducted to characterize participant demographics, as well as teachers' reported perceptions related to the upcoming transition. A series of GLMMs were conducted to determine how teacher's burnout, teachers' network support and children's disruptive classroom behavior contribute to teachers' perceptions of their students' upcoming transition. Models included fixed effects for teachers' years of experience teaching special education, student's placement and type of transition, as well as for site, cohort and time. A nested variable for teachers within schools was included as a random effect in each model.

Results: Teachers in this sample reported that they received *some support* from their current school team and were *mostly satisfied* with their communication with the team, as well as with the way the current team prepared the student for transition. Teachers also reported that, on average, they felt that their students' transition will be *somewhat successful*. Results of GLMMs indicated that increased teachers' burnout ($F(6,86) = 2.556, p < 0.05$) and increased children's classroom problem behaviors ($F(1,115) = 5.549, p < 0.05$) predicted teachers' perceptions of a less successful transition for their student. Teachers' increased network support ($F(1,110) = 4.120, p < 0.05$) predicted increased satisfaction with their communication with their school team.

Discussion: Findings underscore the importance of providing additional teacher supports for facilitating successful new school transitions. Teachers who reported less burnout and less classroom problem behavior from their transitioning student were more likely to report that they anticipate a successful transition. Additionally, teachers with more individuals in their support network were more likely to report satisfaction with the way the current school prepared their student for transition. These results give insight into teachers' perceptions regarding their students' upcoming school transition and reflect the need for additional teacher supports in order to facilitate successful school transitions for students with ASD, particularly for less connected and exhausted teachers, and students with problem behaviors.

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