

# Can I Teach Kids With Autism Spectrum Disorder? Investigating Teacher Self-Efficacy Within An Emerging Population of Students

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## What is This Study About?

- **Teacher self-efficacy** refers to teachers' beliefs about their capability to teach.
- This study focuses on teachers' self-efficacy for teaching students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- Teacher self-efficacy has been shown to affect motivation, stress levels, student achievement, job satisfaction, and amount of given effort.
- This study is grounded in Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, which accentuates the importance of personal factors in influencing and being influenced by behaviors and environmental factors.

**1 IN 68** children are diagnosed with ASD every year  
(Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2015)

### Guiding Question:

*How can we measure a teacher's beliefs for effectively teaching a student with ASD? How is this student-specific form of self-efficacy associated with a general form of self-efficacy?*

## Purpose of Study

To develop an instrument to measure teachers' self-efficacy for teaching students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

**The goal of this study was to demonstrate validity evidence based on (a) content, (b) response processes, (c) internal structure, and (d) relations to other variables.**

## Participants

### Phase 1: Item development

Experts in the field of ASD  
(n = 3)



Experts in the field of self-efficacy  
(n = 3)



Certified K-12 Teacher (n = 10)



### Phase 2: Instrument Validation

N = 134 K-12 teachers

- Mean age = 37.81
- 81% female
- General education n = 105
- Special education n = 29

Note: The use of ASD throughout this poster refers to autism spectrum disorders

## Teacher Self-Efficacy for Autism Scale (TSEAS)

"Please rate how certain you are that you can do the following tasks with regard to one particular student with autism. While completing this activity, please have one current or past student with autism in mind when ranking each of the following statements. If you have not taught a student with autism, please consider how certain you are that you can accomplish the following tasks in the occasion that you might have a student with autism in your class."

	Not certain at all	A little certain	Somewhat certain	Very certain
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	Motivate this student when he or she shows low interest on a topic			
2	Keep this student on task during difficult assignments			
3	Resolve a disruptive behavior			
4	Sustain a positive student-teacher relationship			
5	Provide meaningful experiences			
6	Make expectations clear about classroom behavior			
7	Establish routines to keep activities running smoothly			
8	Gauge student comprehension			
9	Differentiate instruction when appropriate			
10	Facilitate appropriate social interactions with peers			
11	Manage transition times			
12	Address student's individual education plan (IEP) goals			

## Results: Internal Structure

### Teacher Self-Efficacy for Autism Scale Factor Loadings for the Unidimensional Solution

Item	Factor 1
1 Motivate	.76
2 On Task	.72
3 Behavior	.66
4 Relationship	.61
5 Consequences	.70
6 Expectations	.52
7 Routines	.60
8 Comprehension	.52
9 Differentiation	.44
10 Social	.73
11 Transition	.65
12 IEP	.40

## Results: Latent Variable Correlations

### Latent Variable Correlations for Variables in the Study

Variable	Teacher Self-Efficacy for Autism Scale	Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale	Self-Regulation
	[95% CI]	[95% CI]	[95% CI]
Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale	.16 [.06, .21]		
Self-Regulation	.30 [.18, .63]	.17 [.13, .29]	
Job Satisfaction	.18 [.16, .23]	.34 [.30, .49]	.21 [.12, .31]

## Discussion

### Internal Structure:

- Preliminary analyses demonstrated an EFA was appropriate, KMO = .85, Bartlett's test of sphericity = 683.83,  $p > .001$ .
- All items loaded on the unidimensional solution confirming this instrument could be interpreted as one construct, self-efficacy for teaching students with ASD.

### Latent Variable Correlations:

- Self-efficacy for teaching students with ASD was significantly correlated with scores from the general teacher sense of efficacy scale, the self-regulation scale, and the job satisfaction scale.

## Future Directions

This study provided preliminary evidence for four types of validity for a new scale. Further evidence is required on larger and more diverse samples.

Following further validation, this scale can be used to answer questions such as:

How can we improve self-efficacy for teaching students with ASD? Can an intervention be designed?

How much does knowledge of ASD affect a teacher's self-efficacy for teaching students with ASD?

*want to know more?*

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