The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says that as many as 1 in 68 children have an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and diagnoses are rising. Chances are good that your school already has programs designed for children with ASD, and research is paving the way to make assessment and intervention more effective.

Diagnostic Assessment
“What About the Girls? Sex-Based Differences in Autistic Traits and Adaptive Skills” says that female students tend to be significantly more impaired in parent-reported autistic traits and adaptive skills, but those with higher IQs are less likely to meet ADI-R criteria, suggesting that diagnostic procedures in use today may miss certain autistic females.


Interventions
A “collateral intervention effect” is a positive behavioral change that wasn’t targeted during intervention, says “Systematic Review of Collateral Effects of Focused Interventions for Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder.” Some 14 desirable collateral effects merit further study, the review says, for students with limited communication and/or cognitive deficits and those with performance deficits.


Math Skills
Problem-solving is an important yet neglected mathematical skill for students with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disability (ASD/ID). Examining three subjects, “Algebraic Problem-Solving for Middle School Students With Autism and
“Intellectual Disability” finds a relationship between modified schema-based instruction (SBI) and mathematical problem-solving, and discusses the implications of this finding for practice and research.  

**School Transitions**
When transitioning to a new school, children with ASD often struggle with anxiety and social pressure, parents feel overwhelmed, and teachers strive to provide appropriate supports, says “Broken Bridges—New School Transitions for Students With Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Systematic Review on Difficulties and Strategies for Success.” The most effective coping strategies involve helping the student adjust to the new setting, individualizing transition supports, clarifying the transition process for parents, and fostering communication between the sending and receiving schools and the home.


**Socialization**
To improve interaction between children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) educated in inclusive settings and their typically developing classmates, “An Interest-Based Intervention Package to Increase Peer Social Interaction in Young Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder” says that an intervention consisting of interest-based, structured play activities with adult instruction can be effective in increasing initiations, responses, and interactive play.


Testing the theory that difficulties in socialization among ASD youth are at the root of behaviors associated with lower quality of life in adulthood, “Social Functioning Predicts Externalizing Problem Behaviors in Autism Spectrum Disorder” finds that socialization scores account for 50 percent of the variance in externalizing behaviors among individuals with ASD.


**Teacher Preparedness**
The prevalence of ASD has been increasing, says “Supporting Students With Autism,” meaning that most educators will deal with students with ASD at some point during their careers. With better understanding of the characteristics of individuals with ASD, educators can improve students’ educational experience and academic success.

American Federation of Teachers (2017). Read the full report here: bit.ly/2nCw96l

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