

School-aged youths have a basic human right to participate in educational and recreational activities at school. Yet, autistic youths are at high risk of being excluded from school and from school-based activities. It is important to understand how this occurs, to ensure that all autistic youths have opportunities to participate in school activities that are equal to the opportunities of their non-autistic peers. The present study investigated multiple influences on the school participation of autistic youths, including youth factors (age and autistic traits), family factors (parent education level and parental self-efficacy for supporting their child's schoolwork) and school factors (the impact of problems autistic youths experienced with the physical and social environments of school). Using an online survey, this study gathered the views and experiences of the parents of 200 autistic youths aged between 4 and 16 years, in the Netherlands. It was found that among the factors, only the impact of problems that autistic youths experienced with the physical environment of school was associated with their school participation. In particular, autistic youths who experienced greater difficulties with the physical environment of school had lower levels of school participation. These findings highlight the pressing need to modify school environments to better accommodate the needs of autistic youths so that they can participate easily and comfortably.