**TEACHER EDUCATION IN AUTISM: A REVIEW OF COURSE OFFERINGS**

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**Objectives:**

In light of recent policy changes which have drastically reduced the availability of funded intervention for children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD; Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, 2019), concerns have been raised about the lack of preparedness of the education system to adequately provide for children with ASD. While some issues pertain to funding and the availability of services, other concerns have been raised as to the availability of trained teachers with specific expertise in educating children with ASD across a range of ability levels.

The Teacher Education in Autism Studies aim to systematically review all Teacher Education programs in Ontario and across Canada to examine the opportunity that teacher-candidates have to engage in coursework specific to the education of children and youth with Developmental Disabilities including ASD in Undergraduate, Masters and Additional Qualifications course listings. This will aid in determining what level of knowledge that teachers possess about ASD and how to educate children diagnosed with the disorder by the time they enter the classroom.

**Method:**

The systematic search uses information contained from Department of Education websites from each university that offers Teacher Education in Ontario and across Canada. Research assistants will use a standardized search procedure to review all course offerings, and search for a list of key words relevant to the target courses. Current listings of available courses and their descriptions will be examined and coursework that is related to the building of knowledge, or education of children and youth with ASD will be identified and classified into categories.

**Results:**

Preliminary data collected has shown that coursework related to ASD and providing teachers with practical strategies to educate children with ASD is largely unavailable in current teacher education programs at all levels.  Final results will include a summary of the availability, content, and types of courses offered. Implications for building educational capacity for children with DD including ASD will be discussed.

**Discussion/Conclusions:**

This study will contribute to the literature pertaining to teacher education and will provide the groundwork for further research aimed at improving Teachers’ Education specific to meeting the needs of learners with ASD.  This study will provide foundational knowledge for the Teacher Education in Autism Survey, which will be refined based on the results of this study.

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**References:**

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. (2019, October 4). Autism in Ontario. Retrieved from https://www.ontario.ca/page/autism-ontario