

Context

Literature shows that **early school transitions** such as that from preschool to primary has a vital **impact** on future academic success or failure of the students (Schulting, Malone & Dodge, 2005).

Nonetheless, such a transition can bring about **various stressors** to parents, students and teachers alike, more **particularly** to families and students with special educational needs such as **ASC** (Starr, Martini & Kuo, 2009; Quintero and McIntyre, 2010; McIntyre and Eckert et al., 2010).

Children with ASC find such transitions particularly difficult due to **specific condition related manifestations** such as a rigidity to change and the need for routine and sameness (APA, 2013; Donders and Hunter, 2010).

Due to such difficulties, it is essential for practitioners working with students with ASC to give priority to **transition planning** (Denkyirah and Agbeke, 2010). Transition planning is a process specifically structured to help children with developmental disabilities and other SEN to experience a smooth transition from one educational setting to another (ibid.).

Even though, a lot of students with ASC transition from preschool to primary every year, there is still a significant **gap in the literature**, more particularly from a managerial perspective (Hendricks, Wehman, 2009).

Aim

The aim of the study is to investigate how sending and receiving schools **manage the vital transition process** and **planning** for students with ASC. To explore this phenomenon, three research questions were developed;

1. What strategies do **sending and receiving schools** use during the **transition planning and process**?
2. What similarities and differences are there in strategies used between different schools?
3. What classifies as a good transition by the schools?

Methodology

To answer the research questions, a **qualitative approach** will be used, as the aim of the research is to explore in-depth the experience of the transition from the participants' perspective (Yin, 2014).

More specifically, individual **semi-structured interviews** will be conducted to staff members of both sending and receiving schools of students with ASC;

Participants will ideally include approximately 12-15 staff members of both sending & receiving schools including;

- **Senior management team (SMT) & /**
- **Teaching assistants (TA),**
- **Early years practitioners,**
- **Class teachers**
- **Inclusion teachers**

Data collected from the interviews, will be transcribed, coded and analysed using **thematic analysis**



Results

As the study is part of ACoRNS, the results of the study will provide a **better insight** to local researchers and practitioners on the planning and managing process of transition of students with ASC. Additionally, the study will **reduce the current gap in literature** on early educational transitions related to students with ASC, which will further **help the autism and research community** as it will further raise awareness on particular issues faced by individuals with ASC.