

## **Autism CRC Australian Educational Needs Analysis - ASD-ENA**

Students with ASD present unique challenges to school systems. An inclusive approach to education requires teachers to address these challenges and to support the unique needs of students with ASD (Batten, 2005, Lynch & Irvine, 2009). The aim of the Australian ASD Educational Needs Analysis (ASD-ENA) project was to produce the first Australian wide needs analysis of students with ASD (aged 5-16 years) and their educational needs. The needs analysis collected information from 4 key stakeholder groups: school administrators, educators and specialist support staff, parents of students with ASD and students with ASD (aged 11-18 years of age). Using a mixed methods approach the needs analysis used an Australian wide online survey to obtain information from the 4 key stakeholder groups regarding the range of educational needs they identified students with ASD (5-18 years) as having within school settings. The survey was followed up with the collection of more in depth qualitative data from focus groups. Key objectives of the project were:

1. To gain a comprehensive profile of the educational support needs of students with ASD
2. To identify the needs of educators to effectively manage and support students with ASD within educational settings and maintain a strong sense of school connectedness
3. To describe the goals identified by parents, students and educators that form the basis of intervention and support of students with ASD with complex needs.
4. To models of service delivery and support that can be successfully utilised to meet the effectively support the needs of the students with ASD within educational contexts.

Ultimately the findings from the survey can guide us to develop appropriate professional development and models of support for students with ASD in educational settings. The findings will also ensure that within educational contexts, school connectedness, maximum retention, participation and engagement of students with ASD within educational settings occurs.