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# The inclusive school in Portugal: the perspective of teachers, families and key actors

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## Abstract

Since the World Conference on Special Needs Education, organized by the Government of Spain in cooperation with UNESCO in 1994, the paradigm of "Education for All" has been consolidated: to provide education for children and youth with disabilities in the regular education system. In the last years, Portugal implemented interesting policies to ensure that all children with disabilities, including those with autism, have access to a quality education in the mainstream public education system. Reference schools for autism and implemented structured units of education based on the TEACCH method were created within the regular system. Nevertheless, the children continue to be part of the regular class.

The presentation is based on new data exploration of a recent quantitative study concerning the impact of public schools on the quality of life of children with autism their families (Nogueira et al. 2014) complemented with data obtained by qualitative methods. A survey was administered to a sample of 300 households with children/youth with autism. In addition, information was also obtained by interviews and focus group to professionals, teachers and other stakeholders. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS and qualitative data was studied through content analysis.

The main domains of the analysis are: i) the access to the public education system; ii) families satisfaction about the inclusion process; iii) the resources and players; iv) the training of educators and the adequacy of the methods; v) family support; and vi) the impact of public school in the family and child with autism syndrome disorder.

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