

Resilience in Daily Routines for Children with Autism

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Abstract

Resilience for children with special needs is often discussed in terms of the families concerned rather than the children themselves. This article reports on a current study that aims to analyse sections of daily routines for children with autism, and to find subsequent examples of resilience that the children show. Under a qualitative research framework, the data is derived from a case study supported by a literature review. The literature review was conducted first to find out existing information that might be useful by parents and teachers to understand resilience of tamariki with autism. Relevant journal articles available in the EBESCO database within the time frame of 2000–2021 were looked at. An integrative review process was applied to navigate answers aligned with the research question. For the case study, the data were anecdotal records, of a child diagnosed with severe autism at the age of three. Anecdotes were from three years after the diagnosis, experienced by the author. The daily routine was divided into regular activities during the periods of morning, afternoon and night, both at home and in an early-childhood setting. The literature review revealed that meal time, toileting, play and transition are the aspects of daily routine that have been studied. However, the findings of these studies were very limited in terms of usefulness to teachers and parents due to their quantitative nature. The case study highlights common trends of resilience in the aspects of a day for a child with autism, while acknowledging differences that prevail. Strands of Te Whāriki, the Aotearoa New Zealand early-childhood curriculum, were used as a framework to analyse data for scaffolding the thoughts and mahi (work) of the early-childhood kaiako (teachers). The study proposes an extended version to include other cases, using social media networks.

Keywords: Children with special needs, children with autism, early-childhood education, daily routines

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