

## Appendix

### **Assessing the needs of Hong Kong secondary and post-secondary students with ASD and their caregivers**

Project Aspire and the Department of Special Education and Counselling at The Education University of Hong Kong launch an exploratory study in March 2025 to fill the research gap in exploring the needs of secondary and post-secondary students with autism and their caregivers, particularly in the Chinese context, employing qualitative methods such as surveys and focus group interviews. The study interviewed 16 participants (5 parents, 5 post-secondary students, and 6 secondary students).

The interview findings revealed that students with autism face challenges such as high self-expectations and difficulties in expressing emotions. Students and their caregivers identified five core needs:

1. Providing opportunities to interact with different people, as students hope to connect with like-minded peers.
2. Being treated as equals, participating in normal activities and interactions.
3. Having space and time for personal growth, as one student stated, "I need alone time to enjoy doing what I want."
4. Enhancing teachers' understanding of students with autism at different developmental stages, with parents suggesting that teachers should deepen their understanding of students' characteristics.
5. Strengthening home-school communication, making effective use of teaching assistants as a bridge between home and school.

Survey link:

[https://eduhk.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_1BnsyWGB7YwzoW](https://eduhk.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1BnsyWGB7YwzoW)

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