

EXAMINING THE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS OF PEERS TOWARD CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Daniela Tamaš*, Ivana Matić Grdinić, Slađana Bojić

University of Novi Sad, Serbia, Faculty of Medicine,
Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation, Novi Sad, Serbia

ORCID iDs: Daniela Tamaš	https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5902-4814
Ivana Matić Grdinić	https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1828-5089
Slađana Bojić	https://orcid.org/0009-0001-2073-3207

Abstract

The development and education of children with autism are influenced by numerous factors, and all participants in the educational process are of great importance. The attitudes and beliefs of peers towards children with autism have an impact on the success of inclusive education, specifically on achieving the maximum potential of the child with autism involved in that process. In line with this, this research aimed to determine the attitudes and behavioral intentions of typically developing children towards children with autism, and to determine which variables influence the acceptance of children with autism by their peers. The Shared Activities Questionnaire (SAQ, Morgan, Walker, Bieberich, Bell, 1996) was used in the research. The study included 206 students of both genders, attending primary schools in grades five to eight. The results of the research indicate the existence of a slightly positive attitude of typically developing children toward children with autism. Other results indicate more positive attitudes within the Academic domain, and more positive attitudes among girls, as well as among students who had no prior experience with children with autism. Based on the results, it can be concluded that there is still a need to implement educational and preventive programs aimed at destigmatising children with autism and promoting their acceptance, both in the school environment and other social contexts.

Key words: autism, inclusive education, attitude, peers, behavioral intentions.

* Corresponding author: Daniela Tamaš, University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation, Hajduk Veljkova 3, 21000 Novi Sad, Serbia, daniela.tamas@mf.uns.ac.rs

ИСПИТИВАЊЕ СТАВОВА И ПОНАШАЈНИХ НАМЕРА ВРШЊАКА ПРЕМА ДЕЦИ СА АУТИЗМОМ

Апстракт

На развој и образовање деце са аутизмом утичу бројни фактори, а неки од кључних фактора су учесници у васпитно-образовном процесу. Ставови и уверења вршњака типичног развоја према деци са аутизмом утичу на успех процеса инклузивног образовања, односно на остваривање максималних потенцијала детета са аутизмом, како у академском домену, тако и на социо-емоционалном плану. У складу са тим, циљ овог истраживања био је да утврди какви су ставови и понашајне намере деце типичног развоја према деци са аутизмом, као и које варијабле утичу на прихватање деце са аутизмом од стране вршњака. У оквиру истраживања коришћен је Упитник о заједничким активностима (енгл. *The Shared Activities Questionnaire – SAQ, Morgan, Walker, Bieberich, Bell, 1996*). Истраживање је обухватило 206 ученика оба пола, од петог до осмог разреда основних школа. Резултати истраживања указују на постојање благо позитивног става деце типичног развоја према деци са аутизмом. Даље анализе указују на позитивније ставове у оквиру академског домена, те на позитивније ставове девојчица, као и деце која претходно нису имала контакт са децом са аутизмом. На основу резултата закључује се да је и даље потребно спроводити едукације и превентивне програме који ће за циљ имати дестигматизацију деце са аутизмом и њихово прихватање, како у школском окружењу, тако и у другим социјалним контекстима.

Кључне речи: аутизам, инклузивно образовање, ставови, вршњаци, понашајне намере.

INTRODUCTION

According to the definition by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterised by the presence of deficits in social communication and social interactions in all contexts, associated with limited repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, and activities. From the definition itself, it can be concluded that the biggest deficits are in the domains of communication and socialisation (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). In children with autism, social skills are not appropriate for the developmental stage. These children very often have difficulties in peer relationships (Dean et al., 2014). The basic indicators of impairment of social interactions in children with autism are inadequate modulation of non-verbal behavior to regulate social interactions, difficulties in establishing friendly relations with other people, the inability to share personal pleasures and interests with other people, and a general lack of social and emotional reciprocity (Petrović, Đorđević & Glumbić, 2021). Communicative deficits are manifested in the most diverse ways, from the complete absence of speech, delays in the development of speech, difficulty initiating or maintaining interaction, and the

presence of echolalia (repeating other people's words) to stereotyped, repetitive, or idiosyncratic language (Dimić & Krstić, 2020).

Attitudes are a very important part of our daily life and functioning. Human behavior is conditioned by attitudes – they influence our actions and predict behaviors (Petrović, Đorđević & Glumbić, 2021). An important feature of attitudes is that they are learned and that, depending on what we know about a person, event, or phenomenon, we form an opinion about it (Bossaert, Colpin, Pijl & Petry, 2011). The learning process itself is linked with the social environment of an individual or group under whose influence attitudes are formed (Talijan, 2017). At younger ages, adults have the greatest influence, while in the period of adolescence, the influence of peers is dominant (Campbell, 2006).

Attitudes toward People with Disabilities

Attitudes towards people with disabilities are not innate but learned, and are conditioned by experience and information (Najman Hižman, Leutar & Kancijan, 2008). Society's attitudes towards people with disabilities often have a negative character (Dimoski & Nikolić, 2015). It is stated that negative attitudes towards people with disabilities negatively affect the process of their education, rehabilitation, and adaptation to the social environment (Monden, Trost, Scott, Bogart & Driver, 2016). Radojlović, Simović, and Nedović (2019) published the results of a research that dealt with whether there was a change in the attitudes of peers towards children with developmental disabilities in Serbia, by comparing the results obtained in research in 2012 and 2017. Children in 2017 had a more positive attitude towards children with developmental disabilities in terms of socialising. Also, more children stated that they knew someone with developmental disabilities. However, attitudes were more negative towards joint work with students with disabilities. The information that children have less desire to work with children with disabilities after many years of inclusive practice in our country is not encouraging.

Research shows that children form attitudes as early as the fourth or fifth year of life, and these attitudes are usually negative (Najman Hijman et al, 2008). Interventions from an early age, because of their susceptibility to change, can lead to more positive attitudes towards people with disabilities. Changing attitudes is a complex and intensive process that is largely based on experience.

Attitudes toward Children with Autism

Children with autism face unique social barriers and are often stigmatised by their peers. Professionals stand for an inclusive communication climate in the classroom that minimises stigma and promotes peer acceptance (Underhill, Ledford & Adams, 2019). Children with autism are

often placed in mainstream education classrooms to facilitate social opportunities with their classmates. Findings indicate that children with autism are less socially integrated than other students, they spend less time socialising and are more often on the periphery of social activities than other children their age (Kasari, Rohteram-Fuller & Gulsrud, 2011). With fewer social experiences, these children have less time to practice and develop age-appropriate social skills. Consequently, the gap between peers and children with autism continues to widen (Rotheram-Fuller, Kasari & Chamberlain, 2010). Negative attitudes towards children with autism affect the quality of life of these children. Such attitudes are very often directed at their family members who become victims of negative stigma (Milačić Vidojević, Gligorović & Dragojević, 2014). The physical appearance of children with autism generally does not differ from the physical appearance of other children. However, their behavior in social situations is most often striking and sets them apart from their peers. The absence of physical stigma affects the expectations of the environment, which at first glance recognises them as children without developmental disabilities, so their expectations are directed at appropriate forms of behavior. Therefore, atypical forms of behavior in children with autism are often interpreted as the result of inadequate parenting (Chambres, Auxiette & Vansingle, 2008).

For education of children with autism to be implemented effectively, interpersonal relationships with peers are of great importance. For children with autism to adapt well to new conditions and better integrate into society, they must encounter understanding and acceptance from their peers. The social interaction that should be established between a child with autism and his peers largely depends on the attitudes that children have toward them. The results of numerous research papers indicate that peer education programs resulted in an increase in positive interactions between children with autism and their peers, and concomitantly reduced the incidence of negative encounters for children with autism. Findings provide evidence supporting the efficacy of an anti-stigma program to support the social inclusion of children with autism in educational environments (Balaz, Byrne & Miellet, 2022).

Daymond et al. (1993) analysed preschoolers' choice of peers for play during one year. The sample included 25 preschoolers who attended an inclusive preschool program. All groups had a teacher and a special education teacher as consultants who taught students about disabilities and differences among people daily. The authors found that teaching children with typical development affected their attitudes toward peers with disabilities. At the beginning of the year, no child with developmental disabilities was chosen as a friend, but at the end of the year, the results showed that five out of nine children with disabilities were chosen as friends by one peer each.

Matthews et al. (2015) aimed to examine the affective, cognitive, and behavioral components of attitudes toward individuals with autism in 224 college students (Matthews, Ly & Goldberg, 2015). The obtained results show that male students show more positive attitudes, and that the attitudes of students who exhibit some of the broader phenotypic characteristics of autism are more negative. Students who were presented with a person with high-functioning autism expressed significantly more positive attitudes than students who did not have any information about the described person. Students who exhibit some of the broader phenotypic characteristics of autism themselves are more likely to initiate social interactions less often, which is also reflected in their responses about active behavior towards people with autism.

For children with autism to adapt well to school conditions and better integrate into society, they must encounter the understanding and acceptance of their peers. Social interaction, which is established between a child with autism and peers, depends on the variance of the attitude that children have towards children with autism. A negative attitude can discourage a child and make it impossible to establish social interaction. Non-acceptance by peers negatively affects the establishment of social interactions and the behavior of children with autism, as well as their quality of life.

This research has the aim to determine the attitudes and behavioral intentions of typically developing children towards children with autism, and to determine which variables influence the acceptance of children with autism by their peers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample

The sample consisted of 206 children attending higher grades of elementary school with an average age of 12.82 (1.09) years. The sample is equal in terms of gender – 49% of the respondents are female, while 51% of the sample is male. Out of the total number, 160 (77.7%) children have experience with children with autism, whether it is a child with autism in their environment or family, or a child with autism is in the same class with them. The respondents received consent from their parents for voluntary participation. The criterion for inclusion in the research was the signed consent of the parents for their child's participation. To conduct the research, the consent of the person in charge of the elementary schools where the research was conducted was obtained, as well as the consent of the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine in Novi Sad.

Procedure and Measures

Students filled out a questionnaire related to general socio-demographic characteristics, as well as information about previous experience with people with autism. After that, students read a vignette that was adapted for this research in which a boy with autism is presented. The vignettes were constructed to provide information that autism is a disorder in socialisation and communication, or that it is characterised by limited and stereotyped interests, and students were informed about autism.

After that, they filled out The Shared Activities Questionnaire (English: The Shared Activities Questionnaire - SAQ, Morgan, Walker, Bieberich, Bell, 1996) (Morgan, Walker M, Bieberich & Bell, 1996). The questionnaire contains 24 items related to certain activities from three domains (general social, academic, and active recreational). The respondent should circle the answer that describes how they feel about the statement offered. A 'yes' answer gets a value of 5, a 'yes, probably' a value of 4, a 'maybe' a value of 3, a 'no, probably not' a value of 2, and a 'no' a value of 1. The maximum value within each domain is 40, and the minimum is 8. The questionnaire was filled in by each child independently and their anonymity was guaranteed. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was checked by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which is 0.915 and represents excellent reliability.

Data Processing

The SPSS 20.0 software package was used for data entry and processing. For the analysis and description of the structure of the sample according to relevant variables, frequency and percentage displays were used to show the representation of a certain category or answer. Descriptive statistics methods were used to determine measures of central tendency (arithmetic mean), measures of variability (standard deviation), and extreme values (minimum and maximum) of observed numerical features. The AT-test for independent samples and a one-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used. In the applied tests, the limit values of the risk probability are at the significance level of 95% ($p < 0.05$) and 99% ($p < 0.01$).

RESULTS

The descriptive data of this research show that students have a slightly positive attitude towards children with autism, which can be seen based on the arithmetic mean of all answers (79.31). The lowest obtained score in peer responses was 35, while the highest was 120 (Table 2).

Table 1. Respondents' answers to The Shared Activity Questionnaire (SAQ)

	N	M	SD	Min	Max
Attitude toward children with autism	206	79.31	15.05	35	120

*N = sample number; M = mean; SD = standard deviation;
Min = lowest score; Max = highest score.

Table 2 presents the descriptive values for the three activity areas included in the Questionnaire.

Table 2. The difference in students' attitudes within the three activity areas

Activity area	M	SD	Min	Max
General Social	27.73	5.41	10	40
Academic	27.50	5.31	14	40
Active Recreational	25.07	5.60	9	40

Examining Table 2, it can be observed that peers express the most positive attitudes in the Academic activity area. One-factor analysis of variance for dependent samples was used to analyse the difference in results in the three mentioned areas. The following table shows the F-test values and significance level, as well as the arithmetic means and standard deviations. Significant differences are observed among the various areas.

Table 3. The difference in the attitudes of peers within the three activity areas

Activity area	F	df	p
General Social			
Academic	5.028	202	< .001
Active Recreational			

The presence of statistically significant differences between the attitudes of girls and boys was checked using the t-test for independent samples. The analysis of the results found significant differences, and they are shown in Table 4. The results show that girls show more positive attitudes towards students with autism compared to boys.

Table 4. Differences in attitudes towards children with autism about gender

	Group	Result(M; SD)	T	df	p
Attitude towards children with autism	M	75.83 (15.02)	-3.476	204	0.001
	F	82.93 (14.28)			

** M= Male students; F=Female students

It was assumed that students with prior experience of knowing children with autism would display more positive attitudes toward children with autism compared to students without experience. The presence of

statistically significant differences between the two groups was checked using the t-test for independent samples. The analysis of the results did not establish significant differences, and they are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Differences in attitudes towards children with autism about previous experience

	Group	Result(M; SD)	T	df	p
Attitude towards children with autism	No experience	80.98 (16.16)	-.613	204	0.67
	With experience	80.05 (14.96)			

DISCUSSION

This research had the task of providing answers about the attitudes and behavioral intentions of typically developing children towards children with autism, as well as which variables influence the acceptance of children with autism by their peers. The results of our research confirmed the more positive attitudes of girls towards children with autism. This data is consistent with the data most often found in the available literature. In her research, Čolić (2015) pointed out that girls had more positive attitudes towards children with autism, compared to boys. The author explains these results with cultural factors and the roles that girls and boys take on in society as they grow up. For girls, it is characteristic that they focus more on providing care and tenderness, while a cooler attitude is preferable for boys when it comes to emotions and the willingness to express them (Čolić, 2015).

The same is confirmed by authors in France who dealt with the attitudes of elementary school students towards their peers with autism (Derguy, Aubé, Rohmer, Marotta & Loyal, 2021). After answering the questions, the results showed that more positive attitudes are present in girls, which is explained by the fact that girls are taught to be more empathetic compared to boys from an early age (Morawska, 2020). It is interesting that, in this research, girls had more positive attitudes when it comes to behaviors, but this did not apply to the affective subscale, which can lead us to the conclusion that they gave socially acceptable answers.

Some studies offer us different data, so in their research, Swaim and Morgan (2001) talk about the fact that female students had a lower level of desire to participate in joint activities with a peer with autism (Swaim & Morgan, 2001). A meta-analysis found that girls are more willing to accept a peer with developmental disabilities, but only when it was a child of the same gender as the respondent, or when both a boy and a girl were presented to the child (Nowicki, 2002).

The assumption is that students with previous experience in knowing people with autism will have more positive attitudes compared to those without experience. The analysis of the results shows that there is

no statistically significant difference between these two groups, and the data obtained is not consistent with the data found in the available literature. We could explain such results by the fact that people who had no experience with a person with autism until now were more open and less prejudiced because they were exposed to new information and experiences during the conduct of the research. Also, the individual differences of people should be considered, which could mean that people who had no experience until now were more ready to accept diversity or that, under the influence of the media and positive stories about people with autism, they built more positive attitudes, or else gave socially acceptable answers.

In contrast to the results obtained in this research, research was conducted in Greece in which different data was obtained (Mavropoulou & Sideridis, 2014). Of the 475 students of upper elementary school age who participated in the study, 224 had weekly contact with a peer with autism, and the results show that students who had contact with peers with autism had more information about their functioning, and showed more positive behavioral intentions.

Research conducted in Zagreb (Leutar, 2003) speaks about the importance of education and work on changing the existing and creating more positive attitudes towards children with autism. Children are mostly superficially informed about their peers with disabilities, and rarely have experience in social interactions and communication with them. They expressed the presence of feelings of pity and were mainly focused on the existing disability. After organising joint activities for children from the regular education system and the system of education for children with developmental disabilities, the student's emphasis shifted to social activities, and disability remained in the background. Both groups of children characterised socialising and joint activities as a positive experience. The results of this research support the fact that joint activities and experiences in getting to know peers with disabilities contribute to creating more positive attitudes in children of the typical population.

In France, a study was conducted on the attitudes of primary school students toward their peers with autism (Derguy et al., 2021). At the beginning, the students were presented with a video showing three children with autism and intellectual disabilities, which were filmed during free and educational activities. After answering the questions, the results showed that more positive attitudes were present in situations where there was previous experience with children with developmental disabilities. The presence of more positive attitudes among students who previously had contact with disabilities is certainly encouraging.

The same data is found in a study conducted in America, on a sample of 234 students from three elementary schools (Campbell, Caldwell, Railey, Lochner, Jacob & Kerwin, 2019). This research additionally highlights the importance of educating students about autism, which has a

positive effect on creating new, more positive attitudes or modifying existing ones.

It is also assumed that students will be most motivated to participate in general activities with their peers with autism. After analysing the results, it was determined that there are significant differences between the activity areas and that students express the most positive attitudes in the academic domain. We find the reason for this in the fact that children already experience items from the academic area daily, so their everyday life does not change when they say that they would do joint activities with peers with autism inside the classroom. Also, items in this domain are familiar to them because they are part of their formal education, and do not require them to leave their comfort zone. The classroom, school corridor, or schoolyard are environments where children feel safe and confident, as opposed to environments intended for certain activities within the recreational domain (e.g. 'I would go to a basketball game with George.'). There is also the possibility that children have recognised that certain academic activities are an opportunity for social interaction and joint engagement in a structured environment, which implies clear tasks and goals, and facilitates communication and interaction with children with autism. The statement with which the students agreed the most, which individually has the highest score, and which also belongs to the academic domain, was 'I would walk with George through the school corridor.' Some of the other claims from the same domain are: 'I would sit next to Đorđe in class,' 'I would eat lunch next to Đorđe at school,' etc. Agreeing with these statements does not mean that students would invite and include a peer with autism in their extracurricular activities, and we conclude that, in the end, we are again only talking about the physical integration of children with autism and being in the same room with peers of typical development.

The results obtained in this research do not follow the results obtained by Čolić in her research. Čolić (2015) talks about the fact that children are the readiest to include a peer with autism in general social activities because that area is the most informal compared to academic and recreational activities, as well as the furthest from the public, so these joint activities would not affect their social status among other things with children of typical development (example activity: 'I would watch TV with a student with autism,' 'I would invite a peer with autism to my house,' etc.). As a possible explanation, the author states that the vignettes show how children with autism can become aggressive if a certain ritual is interrupted, and that there is a possibility that this also contributed to such responses in children (Čolić, 2015).

CONCLUSION

The results of this research indicate the existence of slightly positive attitudes in children with typical development, which is encouraging data, with opportunities for great progress. The existence of more positive attitudes of girls can be connected to the way of education that is present in these areas. We should not ignore the sociocultural factors that can influence girls' attitudes to be formed under the influence of the parental model, the media, as well as social norms that influence the formation of attitudes about different groups, including children with autism, which imply a greater sensitivity of girls.

The fact that children who have no previous experience with children with autism have slightly more positive attitudes may also indicate the fact that they do not have enough knowledge and a realistic picture of autism.

The limitation of this research is reflected in the fact that we cannot claim with certainty that the expressed willingness to engage in joint activities with a peer with autism would represent the actual reaction of the examinee when they found themselves in a real situation. It would be useful to include a wider range of activities in research, to better understand children's preferences and willingness to engage in different aspects of the life of a child with autism. Also, the attitudes and beliefs that were examined were formed based on a vignette, and there is a possibility that the answers would have been different if the children had had the opportunity to see a peer with autism live or on video. Direct contact with a person with autism would allow children to experience first-hand interaction and communication with them, which would reduce prejudice through concrete experience. This would potentially affect the change of attitudes and behavioral intentions towards them, which does not imply that these attitudes would be more positive or negative. Only through closer contact would the child be able to connect with a person with autism on a higher level. Although it is difficult to generalise results, most research indicates that direct contact with individuals with autism is beneficial in promoting positive attitudes and understanding. However, it should be emphasised that each child is themselves an individual, and that direct contact does not necessarily imply more positive attitudes and a greater willingness to engage in joint activities.

Although the sample of this study showed slightly positive attitudes toward children with autism generally, when looking at individual items, it can be concluded that there is a certain degree of stigmatisation, which indicates the need to implement specific educational strategies and interventions that would improve the position of children with autism both in the school environment, as well as in other social contexts. It is also necessary to examine the long-term effects of inclusive programs and activities on the attitudes of peers and their behavioral intentions, to assess whether positive attitudes are maintained over time and whether they

are transferred to other situations. Further research in this area may contribute to the development of effective strategies to promote inclusion and understanding of individuals with autism among their peers.

REFERENCES

- American Psychiatric Association. (2022). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed., text rev.). <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425787>
- Balaz, L., Byrne, M. K., & Miellet, S. (2022). "Understanding Our Peers": A Naturalistic Program to Facilitate Social Inclusion for Children with Autism in Mainstream Early Childhood Services. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 69(5), 1583-1600. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2020.1821872>
- Bossaert, G., Colpin, H., Pijl S.J. & Petry, K. (2011). Attitudes of Belgian adolescents towards peers with disabilities. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 32(2):504-9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2010.12.033>
- Campbell, J.M. (2006). Changing children's attitudes toward autism: A process of persuasive communication. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, 18(3), 251-272. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007%2Fs10882-006-9015-7>
- Campbell, J.M., Caldwell, E.A., Railey, K.S., Lochner, O., Jacob, R. & Kerwin, S. (2019). Educating students about autism spectrum disorder using the kit for kids curriculum: Effects on knowledge and attitudes. *School Psychology Review*, 48(2), 145-156. <https://doi.org/10.17105/SPR-2017-0091.V48-2>
- Dean, M., Kasari, C., Shih, W., Frankel, F., Whitney, R., Landa, R., ... & Harwood, R. (2014). The peer relationships of girls with AUTISM at school: comparison to boys and girls with and without AUTISM. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 55(11), 1218-1225. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12242>
- Derguy, C., Aubé, B., Rohmer, O., Marotta, F. & Loyal, D. (2021). Another step to school inclusion: Development and validation of the children's attitudes toward Autism Questionnaire. *Autism*, 25(6), 1666-1681. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613211000163>
- Diamond, K., Furgy, W.L. & Blass, S. (1993). Attitudes of preschool children toward their peers with disabilities: A year-long investigation in integrated classrooms. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 154(2), 215-221. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221325.1993.9914735>
- Dimić, I. & Krstić, M. (2020). Contribution and implication of theory of mind: Neurotypical children vs children on the autism spectrum disorder. *Teme*, 44(3), 661-679. doi:10.22190/teme200227046d. <https://doi.org/10.22190/TEME200227046D>
- Dimoski, S. & Nikolić, G. (2015). Značaj odnosa društva prema osobama sa smetnjama u razvoju za realizaciju obrazovne inkluzije u Srbiji [The importance of society's attitude towards persons with developmental disabilities for the realization of educational inclusion in Serbia]. *Sociološki pregled*, 49(4), 419-443. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5937/socpreg1504419D>
- Kasari, C., Rohteram-Fuller, E. & Gulsrud, A. (2011). Making the connection: Randomized controlled trial of social skills at school for children with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 53(4), 431-439. doi:10.1111/j.1469-7610.2011.02493.x. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2011.02493.x>
- Leutar, Z. (2003). Odnos vršnjaka prema djeci sa invaliditetom [The attitude of peers towards children with disabilities]. *Hrvatska revija za rehabilitacijska istraživanja*, 39(2), 233-244.

- Matthews, N.L., Ly, A.R. & Goldberg, W.A. (2015). College students' perceptions of peers with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 45(1), 90-99. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-014-2195-6>
- Mavropoulou, S. & Sideridis, G.D. (2014). Knowledge of autism and attitudes of children towards their partially integrated peers with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 44(1), 1867-1885. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-014-2059-0>
- Milačić Vidojević, I., Gligorović, M. & Dragojević, N. (2014). Tendency towards stigmatization of families of a person with autistic spectrum disorders. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 60(1), 63-70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020764012463298>
- Monden, K.R., Trost, Z., Scott, W., Bogart, K.R. & Driver, S. (2016). The unfairness of it all: Exploring the role of injustice appraisals in rehabilitation outcomes. *Rehabilitation Psychology*, 61(1), 44-53. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/rep0000075>
- Morawska, A. (2020). The effects of gendered parenting on child development outcomes: A systematic review. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 23(1), 553-576. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10567-020-00321-5>
- Morgan, S.B., Walker, M., Bieberich, A.A. & Bell, S. (1996). *The Shared Activity Questionnaire*. Unpublished manuscript. Memphis: University of Memphis.
- Najman Hižman, E., Leutar, Z. & Kancijan, S. (2008). Stavovi građana prema osobama s invaliditetom u Hrvatskoj u usporedbi s Europskom unijom [Attitudes of citizens towards persons with disabilities in Croatia compared to the European Union]. *Socijalna ekologija: časopis za ekološku misao i sociološka istraživanja okoline*, 17(1), 71-93.
- Nowicki, E. & Sandieson, R. (2002). A meta-analysis of school-age children's attitudes towards persons with physical or intellectual disabilities. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 49(1), 243-265. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912022000007270>
- Petrović, I., Đorđević, M. & Glumbić, N. (2021). Stavovi vršnjaka prema osobama sa poremećajima iz spektra autizma - pregled istraživanja [Attitudes of peers towards people with autism spectrum disorders - a review of research]. *Beogradska defektološka škola*, 27(1), 27-43.
- Radojlović, J., Simović, T. & Nedović, G. (2019). Poređenje stavova dece tipičnog razvoja prema deci sa smetnjama u razvoju u 2012. i 2017. godini [Comparison of the attitudes of children with typical development towards children with developmental disabilities in 2012 and 2017]. *Engrami*, 41(2), 6-20. <https://doi.org/10.5937/engrami1902006R>
- Rotheram-Fuller, E., Kasari, C., Chamberlain, B. & Locke, J. (2010). Social involvement of children with autism spectrum disorders in elementary school classrooms. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 51(11), 1227-1234. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2010.02289.x>
- Swaim, K.F. & Morgan, S.B. (2001). Children's attitudes and behavioral intentions toward a peer with autistic behaviors: Does a brief educational intervention have an effect? *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 31(2), 195-205. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1023/A:1010703316365>
- Underhill, J. C., Ledford, V., & Adams, H. (2019). Autism stigma in communication classrooms: exploring peer attitudes and motivations toward interacting with atypical students. *Communication Education*, 68(2), 175-192. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2019.1569247>
- Talijan, B.K. (2017). *Promena stavova prema učenicima sa Daunovim sindromom primenom programa indirektnog kontakta* [Changing attitudes towards students

- with Down's syndrome using the indirect contact program] (doktorska disertacija). Beograd: Fakultet za specijalnu edukaciju i rehabilitaciju.
- Čolić, M. (2015). Uticaj formiranih uverenja o karakteristikama autizma dece neurotipičnog razvoja na prihvatanje vršnjaka sa autizmom [The influence of formed beliefs about the characteristics of autism in children with neurotypical development on the acceptance of peers with autism]. *Specijalna edukacija i rehabilitacija*, 14(2), 169-191. <https://doi.org/10.5937/specedreh14-8735>

ИСПИТИВАЊЕ СТАВОВА И ПОНАШАЈНИХ НАМЕРА ВРШЊАКА ПРЕМА ДЕЦИ СА АУТИЗМОМ

Даниела Тамаш, Ивана Матић Грдинић, Слађана Куртић

Универзитет у Новом Саду, Медицински факултет,
Катедра за специјалну едукацију и рехабилитацију, Нови Сад, Србија

Резиме

На развој и образовање деце са аутизмом утичу бројни фактори, а неки од кључних фактора су учесници у васпитно-образовном процесу. Ставови и уверења вршњака типичног развоја према деци са аутизмом утичу на успех процеса инклузивног образовања, односно на остваривање максималних потенцијала детета са аутизмом, како у академском домену, тако и на социо-емоционалном плану. У складу са тим, циљ овог истраживања био је да утврди какви су ставови и понашајне намере деце типичног развоја према деци са аутизмом, као и које варијабле утичу на приhvатање деце са аутизмом од стране вршњака. У оквиру истраживања коришћен је Упитник о заједничким активностима (енгл. *The Shared Activities Questionnaire – SAQ, Morgan, Walker, Bieberich, Bell, 1996*). Истраживање је обухватило 206 ученика оба пола, од петог до осмог разреда основних школа. Резултати истраживања указују на постојање благо позитивног става деце типичног развоја према деци са аутизмом. Даље анализе указују на најпозитивније ставове у оквиру академског домена. Разлог томе проналазимо у чињеници да су ајтеми из академског домена нешто што деца већ свакодневно доживљавају, те се њихова свакодневница не мења када кажу да би обављали заједничке активности са вршњацима са аутизмом унутар учионице. Позитивнији ставови девојчица делом су обликовани под утицајем родитељског модела, медија, као и друштвених норми које подразумевају да оне показују већу социјалну осетљивост и израженију емпатију. Претпоставка да ће ученици са претходним искуством у познавању деце са аутизмом имати позитивније ставове у односу на оне без искуства није потврђена. Анализа резултата показује да нема статистички значајне разлике међу ове две групе, те добијени подаци нису у складу са подацима које налазимо у литератури. Иако је узорак овог испитивања испољио благо позитивне ставове према деци са аутизмом у глобалном погледу, када се посматрају појединачни ајтеми може се закључити постојање одређеног степена стигматизације, што указује на потребу спровођења специфичних стратегија едукације и интервенција које би побољшале положај десе са аутизмом како у школском окружењу, тако и у другим социјалним контекстима. На основу резултата закључује се да је и даље потребно спроводити едукације и превентивне програме који ће за циљ имати дестигматизацију деце са аутизмом и њихово приhvатање, како у школском окружењу, тако и у другим социјалним контекстима.