



Partnering with Elementary Schools to Strengthen Outcomes for Students with Autism

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An Invitation from: The Efficacy Study for Elementary Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder (TESELA)

TESELA is collaborating with elementary schools in North Carolina to support students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), their families, and the educators who serve them. The goal is to improve access, experiences, and learning in elementary schools. We are looking for 60 elementary schools across North Carolina to partner with us to build and/or enhance supportive programs for the growing number of elementary students with autism. If your school serves at least 8 students under autism eligibility (primary or secondary), you may qualify to participate in the TESELA research study.



Benefits to Partnering with TESELA

Schools will:

- Receive a written report and debrief from the APERS, an assessment of supports for students with ASD.
- Receive support in planning for program quality improvement.
- Receive access to TESELA materials and resources.

Students will:

- Receive teaching and programming that targets their unique learning needs.
- Be better prepared for continuing in their educational program and preparation for middle school.

School staff will:

- Receive support in writing quality IEPs.
- Learn and refine their use of evidence-based approaches and techniques for working with students with autism (and other learning needs).
- Receive financial stipends for participating.

Families will:

- Become partners in the TESELA process and in supporting their child.
- Receive financial stipends for participating.



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About TESELA

TESELA is a research study funded by the US Department of Education that focuses on increasing teacher's use of evidence-based practices for elementary students with ASD. It builds on school and student strengths and incorporates evidence-based practices and strategies in order to assist students achieve their IEP goals and educational outcomes.

This study will compare the educational programming at TESELA sites to typical educational programming for students with ASD. Participating schools will help to find 8–12 students with ASD to participate in the study for one academic year. Schools will be randomly selected to be in one of two groups: the TESELA group or the services as usual group.

- Schools in the TESELA group will receive ongoing training, coaching, and materials from TESELA staff over the course of 12 months.
- Schools in the services as usual group will follow their regular educational programming for 12 months but will receive access to all TESELA resources at the end of the full study.

TESELA Study Process

Schools will:

- Form an Autism Team ("A-Team") to participate in the training, coaching, and implementation of evidence-based practices (EBPs).
- Support scheduling for APERS, an assessment of supports for students with ASD, and the Leiter, a non-verbal measure of cognitive ability.
- Support the A-Team with time for training and implementing the TESELA model.

School staff will:

- Collaborate with the TESELA team in selecting and writing high quality goals for the students.
- Participate in ongoing training and coaching with the TESELA team, including a 1-day Summer TESELA Academy (stipend provided).
- Complete assessments related to the students at 2 time points during the 12-month study.
- Assess their own knowledge and skill level in delivering evidence-based practices 2 times during the study.

Students will:

- Benefit from individualized interventions (EBP) that address specific IEP goals.

Families will:

- Complete questionnaires related to the student and family at 2 time points during the 12-month study.



NPDC-TESELA