Diverse Perspectives on Social-Interactional Strengths in Children with Disabilities: A Socioecological Study

Abstract

Children identified with High Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorders (HFASD) or Asperger Syndrome are often characterized as lacking social-interactional abilities. However, these individuals demonstrate a variety of social-interactional strengths in their daily life that may not be acknowledged in education research and utilized in school settings. The present study examined parents’ perspectives and experiences regarding social strengths of children diagnosed with HFASD or Asperger Syndrome. Our findings revealed three social interactional strengths that the children developed and practiced in multiple socioecological activity contexts via various mediums: Empathy, sensing fairness, and story telling. This study provides insights to develop socioecological conceptualizations of social skills in this population. Findings of the study contribute to the limited but growing literature on social strengths of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and have implications in designing academic and social programs.

Keywords: Autism Spectrum Disorders, Asperger Syndrome, Social-interactional Strengths, Socioecological Theory.

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