

Short Communication

## CALMING EFFECT OF NURSERY RHYMES ON KINDERGARTNERS WITH ASD

<sup>1</sup>Julie Bhatia

Qusais1, Dubai

### ABSTRACT

Any change in the surroundings may trigger a child with autism leading to meltdowns. The regrouping can be facilitated by playing soothing music or nursery rhymes which will calm the little minds and help resume normal functioning.

**Keywords:** Autism Spectrum Disorder, Learning Support Assistant, autism meltdown, regrouping, repetitive behaviour, therapy.

### INTRODUCTION

Autism Spectrum Disorder refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviours, speech and non-verbal communication [1]. Working as an LSA (Learning Support Assistant) for a 4-year-old I observed that any changes in the surroundings or routine caused the child to be upset and throw tantrums. This could be corrected by playing nursery rhymes with which the child could connect himself [2].

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Situation 1: Whilst going for therapy from classroom to the therapy room if the child was taken by a route different from the daily one, he threw tantrums by falling on the ground and crying. By playing nursery rhymes on the mobile the child recollected himself along with support from my side by talking to him. Slowly he got up with support and followed me.

Situation 2: During dance practice for annual day concert, loud music and change in atmosphere along with too many people triggered the child and he bit others and myself trying to communicate his displeasure. By removing him from the room for a while and giving him a plushy toy and playing pleasant music, he could be brought back to the practice room where he practiced the dance with my support along with his peers.

Situation 3: Once there was a popcorn making activity in class where the class teacher used a popcorn making machine to pop the corn kernels and make popcorn out of it which the children could eat. The machine-made sound like a mixer – blender and this disturbed the child very much and he started crying badly. He had to be taken away from the classroom to the sensory room where some softly played music and rhymes calmed him. After spending some time there, only could he be taken back to the classroom.

### RESULTS

Music is one of the creative mediums that has a range from calm and classic to fast and energetic. There is something for everyone. There are many autistic children that seem drawn to music and its therapeutic and calming properties. When coping with a stressful or uncomfortable activity, music

can be what helps soothe the child enough to get them through whatever activity is uncomfortable. (Autism Coping Skills: Key to Reducing Overwhelm) Music therapy may also help children with ASD to improve their skills in important areas such as social interaction and communication.

## CONCLUSION

Soothing music and nursery rhymes help to calm the minds of young children with ASD. However we should keep in mind that the same tactics may not work with every child with ASD or even with the same child in every situation. One has to adopt different techniques depending on the situation and temperament, using music / rhymes as a calming technique being one of them. One has to be patient, empathetic and most importantly to be able to understand the need of the child to be able to connect to them and make a difference.

## REFERENCES

1. Autism Coping Skills: Key to Reducing Overwhelm
2. Autism Speaks: <https://www.autismspeaks.org> > what is Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)