

The impact of childhood autism spectrum disorder on parent's labour force participation: Can parents be expected to be able to re-join the labour force?

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We know that parental employment is a significant factor in ensuring that parents can afford to access care for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This research aimed to identify the influence of ASD on parental employment and whether childcare access may impact on parents' participation in the labour force. We found that a significantly larger percentage of mothers and fathers whose children had ASD were not in the labour force from the time their child was aged 2 years through to 11 years. Between the ages of 2 and 5, this was explained by factors including the age of the mother and father, the educational levels of the parents, parents' marital status, and whether mothers were in the labour force prior to the birth of the child. After the age of 5, mothers of children with ASD were twice as likely to be not in the labour force as other mothers. Evaluations of new interventions or treatments for children with ASD should consider how the proposed service impacts on the labour force participation of parents of children with ASD, particularly when the children are of schooling age.