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NASET Special Educator e-Journal

Exceptional Teachers Teaching Exceptional Children

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Special Education Legal Alert

Perry A. Zirkel
January 2026

This month’s update identifies two recent court decisions that respectively address whether emails are student records and how student elopement may interact with extended school year (ESY). For related publications and special supplements, see perryzirkel.com

<p>On November 26, 2025, the Nevada Supreme Court issued an officially published decision in <i>Clark County School District v. Eighth Judicial District Court of Nevada</i>. The issue was whether emails are student records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which is incorporated in the IDEA. In this case, the child was a special education student in the district, and the child’s grandmother was his adoptive mother and legal guardian. After filing for a due process hearing to challenge the alleged inappropriate change in placement of the child, she requested access to his educational records. Believing that the documents that the school district provided in response to her request were incomplete and seeking them also for the child’s dependency case in state court, the guardian specifically requested all emails mentioning her child that the district stored on its Google cloud server. The district refused. The guardian filed a motion in the dependency case for expedited production of the emails. The state court granted her motion, and the school district sought a writ of prohibition from the state’s highest court. A panel of three members of the state supreme court ordered the lower court to determine which of the emails directly related to the child. The district sought reconsideration en banc, i.e., by the full membership of the state supreme court.</p>	
<p>The initial issue was whether this special writ procedure, which is reserved for cases in which the seeking party lacks an adequate and speedy legal remedy, was appropriate in this case.</p>	<p>The court ruled that it was appropriate because the lower court’s order, which was upon joinder of the school district to the guardian’s dependency case, was not a final decision and, thus, was not appealable to the state’s intermediate, appellate court.</p>
<p>Both parties cited the U.S. Supreme Court’s <i>Owasso</i> (2002) decision, which ruled that “educational records” under FERPA means student-identifiable information “maintained” by the institution.</p>	<p>Nevada’s highest court interpreted <i>Owasso</i> to apply to “an institutional record stored in a designated place that is, typically, overseen by a designated individual responsible for maintaining such records” in contrast with (a) “materials informally created in the ordinary course of business” and (b) records that only “<i>incidentally</i> ... mention the student’s name”</p>
<p>Ultimately then, do emails that mention a student qualify as educational records, as the child’s custodian requested in this case?</p>	<p>In this court’s view, only those emails qualify that directly relate to the student and are deliberately stored by the district’s records custodian; thus, the court vacated the lower court’s order because the guardian’s request was clearly much too broad.</p>
<p>This decision does not necessarily extend to other states, although a few courts in other jurisdictions have issued similar rulings. Moreover, this decision does not exclude all email, and it was a close case decided by a 4x3 vote. Finally, note that FERPA and the IDEA provide parents and guardians with the right of access (i.e., “inspect and review”), which does not necessarily extend to copies.</p>	

On December 23, 2025, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which covers the states of Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, issued an officially published decision in *North East Independent School District v. I.M.* The child in this case was a fourth grader with autism, intellectual disabilities, and speech impairment. His communication is largely through gestures, facial expressions, and an iPad with a specialized communications app. His third-grade IEP included a special education class, speech and occupational therapy, elopement-avoidance software on his iPad, and an ESY program that was 2 weeks longer than the standard 3-week, half-day program. He had eloped during 18% of the 3-week program at the end of grade 2. During grade 3, he ran away for 40% of the school days until the spring break, with added regression directly thereafter. In response, the IEP team met to plan for grade 4 and disagreed about ESY. His parents sought full days for the entire summer, but the district members prevailed in limiting ESY to half-day sessions for 6 weeks, leaving a month-long break until the start of grade 4. His behavior regressed again, including elopements during 30% of the school days in the first 2 weeks and at least 20 toileting incidents during the first 6 weeks. Concerned with this regression even after short breaks and fearing for his life based on the elopements, his parents requested an IEP meeting to meaningfully address his elopements and toileting regression. The IEP team did not agree that the problems were attributable to school breaks, thus only responding with other revisions, such as a safety vest on the school bus and added behavior interventions. A few weeks later, in his most dangerous elopement to date, he escaped campus through an unlocked gate and ran into a busy road, only to be saved by bystanders. The IEP team met again, and the parents unsuccessfully requested more extensive ESY services not only for the summer but also after shorter school breaks. They filed for a due process hearing, and the hearing officer decided in their favor. The remedy was full-summer ESY services and a year-round voice-assisted communication device. After the federal district court affirmed, the school district appealed to the Fifth Circuit.

<p>First, challenging the lower court’s ruling that its IEP failed to appropriately address elopement and toileting, the district argued that the child’s IEP included a behavior intervention plan (BIP) that more generally effectuated progress for both these behaviors.</p>	<p>Puzzled by the district’s stopping its systematic tracking of elopement, the court found the evidence nevertheless sufficient to show that the failure to extend ESY services to the final month of the summer and to other breaks caused regression for toileting and—“pos[ing] a grave, present danger—elopement.</p>
<p>Second, the district argued that the lower court’s ruling was not in accord with previous Fifth Circuit decisions specific to substantive appropriateness, including the significant weight that they accorded to academic progress and BIPs.</p>	<p>To the contrary, the Fifth Circuit distinguished its previous district-favorable decisions except for their holistic analysis and found neatly fitting instead its Boone decision in light of the life-threatening elopement behaviors. The court also cited the <i>Andrew F.</i> “appropriately ambitious” factor for students who are not fully integrated and cannot achieve on grade level.</p>

This otherwise weighty federal appeals court decision is tempered by (a) the rather relaxed standard of appellate review for lower court decisions, (b) the emphasis on the particular severity of the child's disability and his elopement behaviors, and (c) the failure to address limiting the remedy to the full summer period. Nevertheless, it merits careful attention for its effect on other behavior-focused cases and on the appropriateness of, as distinct from the eligibility for, ESY services, including the potential extension to non-summer breaks.

Buzz from the Hub

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/buzz-december2025/>

24 Ways to Make the Holidays Kid-Friendly: Strategies to help families of children with autism, ADHD, anxiety, and other challenges sidestep common sources of stress

This article for the Child Mind Institute provides strategies for families of kids with autism, anxiety, ADHD, and other challenges to make the holiday season more enjoyable for everyone.

Read the article [here](#).

An Age-By-Age Guide to Helping Kids Manage Emotions

When we teach kids to identify their emotions, we give them a framework that helps explain how they feel, which makes it easier for them to deal with those emotions in a socially appropriate way. This free printable from Quality Start LA shares simple tips to help young children, from infancy to preschool-age, manage their emotions.

[Find the free printable here.](#)

New to Special Education? Start here!

This resource page from **PEATC**, the Parent Training and Information (PTI) center in Virginia, offers resources and support for families navigating the special education system. It includes guides, templates, fact sheets, and tools to help parents understand evaluations, IEPs, 504 Plans, and their rights under the law. Some of the resources and information are specific to state of Virginia.

[Access all the resources here.](#)

For your state specific information, contact the PTI that serves your state. Search for the PTI [here](#).

Employment Checklist for Students (Ages 14-22) with Disabilities

Getting a job is an exciting experience that takes planning. There are important documents you may need before you can get a job. There are skills you will need to prepare you for employment, and actions that you may need to take to be successful. This checklist from **PEATC** can help you prepare for employment.

[Access the checklist here.](#)

Self-Advocacy Storytelling Toolkit

Another great tool on self-advocacy! The *Self-Advocacy Storytelling Toolkit*, developed by the Youth Engagement Transition Initiative (YETI), is a guide to empower youth with disabilities in sharing their personal stories effectively.

[Access the guide here.](#)

Disability Advocacy Videos for Families

The PACER Center has created a set of short videos in multiple languages that address parent's common questions and concerns about advocating for their child with a disability at school and beyond. Tip sheets are also available in English and Spanish and can be found in the video's description.

Watch the videos here in [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Somali](#), and [other languages](#).

Update from the U.S. Department of Education

<https://www.ed.gov/>

Birth to Grade 12 Education-Resources

<https://www.ed.gov/birth-to-grade-12-education>

Available Grants

<https://www.ed.gov/grants-and-programs/apply-grant/available-grants>

U.S. Department of Education Prevents More Than \$1 Billion in Federal Student Aid Fraud This Year, Additional Crackdowns Expected in 2026

December 11, 2025

The U.S. Department of Education today announced that it has prevented \$1 billion in Federal student aid fraud since January 2025.

U.S. Department of Education to Update Accreditation Handbook to Support High-Quality, High-Value Education

December 10, 2025

The Department today issued a Request for Information (RFI) to solicit feedback from the public on how best to envision and update the Accreditation Handbook.

University System of Georgia Chancellor Sonny Perdue Highlights Civics Education During History Rocks! Tour Stop in Georgia

December 9, 2025

Yesterday, Chancellor of the University System of Georgia Sonny Perdue visited Allatoona High School in Acworth, Georgia as part of the national History Rocks! Trail to Independence Tour.

U.S. Department of Education Announces Agreement with Missouri to End Biden Administration's Illegal SAVE Plan

December 9, 2025

ED announced a proposed joint settlement agreement with the State of Missouri that would end the Biden Administration's illegal 'Saving on a Valuable Education' (SAVE) Plan.

U.S. Department of Education Launches New Earnings Indicator to Support Students and Families in Making Informed College Decisions

December 8, 2025

The Department launched a new earnings indicator to complement the FAFSA process. Drawn from existing ED data, the indicator provides students and their families with clear, easy-to-understand information about a school's post-graduate earnings.

U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon Concludes First Stops on National History Rocks! Tour in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey

December 5, 2025

Today, U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon completed the U.S. Department of Education's (the Department) first three school visits on the national History Rocks! Trail to Independence Tour in celebration of America's upcoming 250th birthday.

U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Labor Celebrate Successful Implementation of Workforce Development Partnership

December 5, 2025

Today, the U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Labor (DOL) provided an update on the Trump Administration's historic actions to integrate the federal government's workforce development portfolio.

U.S. Department of Education Awards Over \$208 Million in Mental Health Grants

December 11, 2025

Today, the U.S. Department of Education announced over \$208 million in new grant awards for the Mental Health Service Professional Demonstration and School-Based Mental Health programs.

U.S. Department of Education Concludes Negotiated Rulemaking Session to Implement the New Workforce Pell Grant Program

December 12, 2025

The Department today concluded the first week of its AHEAD negotiated rulemaking committee, where negotiators reached consensus to create the federal government's new Workforce Pell Grant program as outlined in President Trump's Working Families Tax Cuts.

U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon Highlights Civic Learning at History Rocks! Event in Cambridge, Maryland

December 15, 2025

Today, U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon visited Maple Elementary in Cambridge, Maryland, as part of the U.S. Department of Education's national History Rocks! Trail to Independence tour in celebration of America's upcoming 250th birthday.

U.S. Department of Education Awards Unprecedented Number of Education Innovation and Research Grants to Improve Literacy

December 15, 2025

Today, the U.S. Department of Education announced \$256 million in new Education Innovation and Research (EIR) grants to improve literacy nationwide.

U.S. Department of Education Launches the Presidential 1776 Award to Celebrate America's Semiquincentennial

December 15, 2025

Today, the U.S. Department of Education announced the launch of the Presidential 1776 Award, a nationwide competition recognizing exceptional student knowledge of the American founding.

U.S. Department of Education Launches \$15 Million Challenge to Create the Next Generation of Talent Marketplaces

December 15, 2025

Today, the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) announced the launch of the Connecting Talent to Opportunity Challenge.

U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon Visits South Carolina on History Rocks! Tour and Returning Education to the States Tour

December 16, 2025

Today, U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon visited West Pelzer Elementary School in Pelzer, South Carolina as part of the U.S. Department of Education's national History Rocks! Trail to Independence tour in celebration of America's 250th birthday.

U.S. Department of Education Reaches Historic Milestone in FAFSA Completions

December 18, 2025

The Department announced that more than 5 million 2026–27 FAFSA® forms have been successfully submitted by students and families across the country, a nearly 150% increase in the number of applications submitted at the same time last year.

U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon Statement on the Office of Legal Counsel's Opinion on the Constitutionality of Race-Based Higher Education Grant Programs

December 19, 2025

U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon today released a statement regarding the DOJ's Office of Legal Counsel's Opinion on the Constitutionality of racial quotas and preferences in the Department of Education's Minority Serving Institution Programs.

U.S. Department of Education Announces Review of Brown University for Potential Clery Act Violations

December 22, 2025

Today, the U.S. Department of Education announced it will conduct a program review of Brown University in response to the December 13, 2025, shooting on its campus, which killed two students.

Rethinking Behavior Plans: Building Executive Function Skills Instead of Managing Misbehavior

By Latasha Duncan, Alexander Capo, Tahisha Merrell

You've seen it before. A student blurts out answers, forgets materials, or shuts down during transitions. The familiar response is to issue a warning, pull a clip, or take away recess because that's what the behavior plan says to do.

But what if the problem is not motivation or defiance? What if the student is not refusing to behave but instead struggling with a skill they have not yet mastered? What if the missing piece lies within the brain's executive function system?

In special education, we know that punishment alone rarely transforms behavior. It may stop a momentary outburst, but it does not teach self-regulation, planning, or sustained focus. When we shift from compliance to skill-building, we stop managing behavior and start growing independence.

This article explores the neuroscience behind behavior, why traditional systems fall short, and how to embed executive function (EF) instruction into everyday routines to create calmer, more capable classrooms.

The Brain's Control Center: Understanding Executive Function

Executive function skills are the brain's management system. They include working memory, planning, organization, emotional control, flexibility, and self-monitoring. These are the skills students use to follow multi-step directions, transition smoothly, persist through challenges, and manage frustration.

Research shows that students with ADHD, autism, and emotional-behavioral disorders often experience significant EF deficits (El Wafa et al., 2020). When a child cannot stay seated, loses focus, or becomes overwhelmed, the behavior is often not “won’t do,” but “can’t do yet.”

Recent studies confirm that direct EF interventions improve students’ emotional control, attention, and task persistence (Kälin & Oeri, 2024). Embedding EF supports into classroom instruction enhances both academic outcomes and behavior, creating lasting gains in self-regulation (Zelazo et al., 2017).

Why Punishment Misses the Mark

Traditional behavior systems such as clip charts, token economies, or office referrals rely on the assumption that students choose to misbehave and will choose differently next time. But if the challenge lies in a skill deficit, no amount of consequence will teach that missing skill.

Four Pitfalls of Punishment-Based Systems

- They may stop a behavior temporarily but do not teach planning, impulse control, or emotional regulation.
- Students with EF challenges often *know* what is expected but lack the cognitive control to consistently do it.
- Punitive responses can heighten anxiety, drain EF capacity, and damage relationships.
- They interpret behavior as “won’t do” rather than “can’t do yet,” missing an opportunity for growth.

As McIntosh and Fox (2019) explain, effective behavior support requires teaching cognitive and emotional regulation just as intentionally as we teach reading or math.

Reframing Behavior: From “Won’t Do” to “Can’t Do Yet”

Behavior is communication. When a student blurts out, shuts down, or refuses to start a task, the issue is often not defiance but a missing executive function skill. Shifting the question from “Why are they misbehaving?” to “What skill is this student missing?” transforms how educators respond.

Ask yourself:

- Is the student forgetting steps because working memory is overloaded?
- Is task initiation breaking down because impulse control or planning skills need support?
- Is the student overwhelmed or emotionally dysregulated because co-regulation or scaffolding is missing?

This reframing allows teachers to interpret behavior as a signal rather than a choice. The IRIS Center (2022a; 2022b) emphasizes that when EF skills are weak, students need explicit teaching, modeling, and guided practice, not more consequences. A student who appears oppositional may simply lack the internal tools to begin, persist, or transition successfully.

By recognizing behavior as a reflection of developing cognitive systems, educators shift from reacting to the outward behavior to teaching the underlying skill. This mindset supports the use of coaching language, predictable routines, and consistent scaffolds that help students move from “can’t do yet” to true independence.

Teaching Executive Function Skills Explicitly

Executive function can and should be taught directly. These skills are the foundation of academic and social success, and they can be strengthened through modeling, practice, and scaffolding.

Core EF Skills and Classroom Strategies

1. Emotional Regulation and Impulse Control

- Model a “pause and plan” strategy: recognize the feeling, take a breath, then decide the next step.
- Use cue cards or scripts such as “Pause → Breathe → Think → Act.”

2. Task Initiation and Time Management

- Provide visual timers, countdowns, and “start cards” that outline the first step.
- Scaffold initiation until students can self-start independently.

3. Working Memory and Sequencing

- Offer step-by-step checklists (“1. Read. 2. Highlight. 3. Respond.”).
- Use repetition and consistent routines to reduce cognitive load.

4. Planning and Persistence

- Teach micro-goals (“I’ll finish three problems before break”) and reflective questioning: “What helped? What will I do next time?”

5. Self-Monitoring and Flexibility

1. Use reflection sheets or peer feedback: “Am I on task? What distracted me? How can I refocus?”

Embedding these strategies into daily instruction helps students internalize EF processes and gradually become more independent.

Structure Supports Success: Reducing Cognitive Overload

Executive function skills thrive in structured and predictable environments because these conditions reduce cognitive load and support self-regulation. Clear routines reduce decision fatigue, freeing mental energy for learning.

Classroom Supports that Make a Difference:

- **Visual schedules:** Post icons or images that show the sequence of classroom activities.

- **Transition scripts:** Practice consistent language (“When the timer rings, close your book and walk to the carpet”).
- **Color-coded systems:** Organize materials by color to reduce confusion.
- **Timers and chunked tasks:** Break large tasks into short segments with built-in breaks.
- **Routine practice:** Revisit expectations weekly so the routine itself becomes the scaffold for behavior.

As noted by Moses (2024) through the National Association for the Education of Young Children, structured environments combined with consistent co-regulation support the development of lifelong self-control.

The Power of Co-Regulation and Coaching Language

Students learn self-regulation by borrowing it from adults. Co-regulation means maintaining calm, attuned support as students practice managing their emotions. The goal is to model composure and gradually transfer that control to the learner.

Try reframing directives as coaching statements:

- ☒ *Instead of:* “Stop doing that!”
- ✓ *Try:* “I see you’re frustrated. Let’s pause, take a breath, and look at your checklist together.”
- ☒ *Instead of:* “Get to work or lose recess.”
- ✓ *Try:* “Starting can be tough. Let’s do the first problem together, then you can finish on your own.”
- *Afterward, reflect:* “You took a breath and got back on track. What helped you do that?”

Research in *Frontiers in Psychology* (2022) confirms that teacher co-regulation directly influences student self-regulation capacity. Calm modeling creates the safety students need to access higher thinking and executive control.

What to Measure Instead: Data for Growth

If we only track behavior incidents, we only see deficits. Instead, measure skill use and progress.

Examples of Meaningful Data

- How often a student used a checklist or strategy.
- Number of independent task initiations.
- Frequency of “pause-and-plan” success moments.

As the Center on PBIS (2025) advises, proactive data helps educators assess instructional effectiveness and student growth, not just compliance.

Outcome: Building Thinkers, Not Just Rule Followers

When behavior plans center on control, students may comply, but they do not grow. When they center on executive function, students develop skills that last a lifetime.

Behavior support at its best is not about compliance but capacity. As educators, our job is not merely to make students behave; it is to teach them to think, plan, adapt, and regulate independently.

This shift, from reaction to reflection, from punishment to skill-building, transforms classrooms. We move from asking, “How do I stop this behavior?” to “How do I help this student succeed?” That is where real growth begins.

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The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Autism Spectrum Disorder

Interventions: Literature Review

By Alva Ward

Author's Note

This literature review was authored by an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) specialist committed to enhancing inclusion in the classroom for learners with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). It reviews existing academic literature that supports AI-based interventions in education, where communication, social-emotional learning, and ethics is a collaborative effort between educators, parents, and technology.

Introduction

AI has proven to be a game-changing concept in special education for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). AI applications have evolved into not only diagnostic tools but also emotion-recognition applications, socially assistive robots, and adaptive learning platforms that personalize instruction to meet individual needs.

AI for ASD intervention has a fundamental task to solve in education. It needs to be able to offer targeted, personalized, consistent, and meaningful learning skills to promote generalization and emotional regulation. As emphasized by Habibi et al. (2025), AI can enhance self-regulation and improve understanding when adhering to ethical and inclusive school systems. The aim of these innovations is not to replace human instruction but to expand teachers' ability to provide meaningful, data-informed support for children. The inclusion of the parents in

this work is key as AI tools are capable of delivering ongoing quality data and engagement opportunities that can connect the home and school ecosystems.

Assessment of current research

Several researchers have shown the potential of the adoption of AI in supporting students with ASD. Atturu and Naraganti (2024) assessed an AI-based personalized learning platform with parental input and interactive modules, and reported significantly higher levels of attention, retention, and adaptive behavior in children. Similarly, Clabaugh et al. (2019) researched extended personalization of socially assistive robots in home environments. Parent satisfaction and student engagement improved over time when this personalization was delivered in a sustainable way in the home environment. They demonstrated the significance of long-term and contextualized learning continuity. These results are consistent with the idea that AI can work as a complement to human instruction rather than a substitute for it.

Alnafjan et al. (2025) determined that robots with a human action recognition system improved imitation skills and attention spans in students with ASD. Integrating robotics into therapy environments enabled active learning and increased social responsiveness. These findings are consistent with those in Diehl et al. (2012), who found beneficial effects of robotic intervention in supporting social communication and emotional expression. Alcorn et al. (2019) investigated educators' perspectives on humanoid robots and observed cautious optimism. Teachers welcomed the motivational aspects but emphasized the importance of predictability, structure, and clarity of educational purposes. Their thinking highlights the fact that technology must supplement, not override, the relational dimensions of teaching.

AI also has the potential to assist in emotional recognition and regulation. Aside from direct instruction, Kushki et al. (2013) found biosensor-based AI models capable of monitoring autonomic response patterns associated with anxiety. Biosensored AI models were capable of monitoring response patterns associated with anxiety-related autonomic states. This can provide support for educators and caregivers with proactive behavior support. These discoveries add to the work of Boccanfuso and O’Kane (2011) who found that biofeedback-driven robots can be used to teach emotional awareness through play. Warren et al. (2015) also found that robotic actions can enhance joint attention skills. Their robotic interactions demonstrated the social engagement effects of robots, resulting in increased attention and social awareness. These studies show AI’s potential to improve emotional growth and communication in a personalized and measurable way.

As an ESE professional, I’ve observed that the most effective implementations happen when teachers, therapists, and families collaborate in interpreting data and supporting progress across different contexts. Alcorn et al. (2019) found that teachers appreciated the predictability AI might provide to lesson plans. However, they stressed the importance of professional development to ensure the implementation of AI appropriately. Likewise, Vallor (2018) stated the importance of fostering the virtues of empathy, patience, and respect. Technology must integrate inclusive, respectful, and family-centered practices in the field. Teachers, therapists, and families must communicate across environments.

Family engagement links technical interventions to lived experience. When parents know how to use data gathered from digital tools, they can better understand their child’s emotional and behavioral goals at home. While AI interventions serve as technology-induced change

agents. Clabaugh et al. (2019) showed that ongoing family engagement and personalization lead to increased children's responsiveness to interventions and to long-term skill retention.

Similarly, Habibi et al. (2025) emphasized that culturally relevant and ethical AI requires a focus on transparency and family involvement. Professionally, these findings confirm that AI only works best in conjunction with a network of human support. Families help generalize these scholastic skills with schools to build academic achievement and also emotional success.

Practice Recommendations

1. Think about how to use AI within educational architectures to improve instruction.

Educators should use AI as a complement to, not as an alternative to, evidence-based teaching strategies. The implementation should be organized in collaboration with teachers, families, and administrators.

2. Work toward ethical use and information transparency. Habibi et al. (2025) emphasized that the AI systems should be operated on with protections to preserve the privacy and dignity of students. Teachers and parents should be given clear explanations of how data is collected, stored, and used.

3. Support professional development for teachers. Alcorn et al. (2019) and Alnafjan et al. (2025) note a need for further professional development in understanding the function of AI, interpretation of data, and aligning technology with learning goals.

4. Support family–technology partnerships. Families are the backbone of consistency in skill acquisition. Educators should help parents reinforce learning and emotional regulation strategies

at home with responsible use of technology. Studies have shown that AI can be helpful in recognition of ASD as well.

5. Encourage and promote interdisciplinary collaboration and study. Through cross-sector collaboration and partnerships with educators and the technology field, we can develop more flexible and equitable solutions for a diverse population of learners.

Conclusion

The research suggests that when used ethically and in partnership, AI can help improve students' communication, attention, and emotional regulation. It can also provide families and teachers with direct access to practical knowledge. Technology alone cannot be a substitute for connections, and AI must function within a compassionate structure that respects the uniqueness of every learner. As Habibi et al. (2025) state, the future of AI in education is determined by equity, transparency, and cultural responsiveness. As an educator, it is my responsibility to navigate this innovation in ways that support students with ASD and their learning in environments that celebrate both technological advancements and human connection.

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