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The Impact of School Life Assistants on Raising the Level of Psychological Immunity Among Mothers of Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the impact of school life assistants, and specifically the effect of accompanying students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), on the level of psychological immunity among the mothers of these students, who are enrolled in mainstream schools within the national education sector. Because ASD requires specific care and follow-up, the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs introduced a new procedure for appointing school life assistants for this group in order to improve their schooling conditions. The study adopted the descriptive method, using a correlational design (individual case studies). All school life assistants of students with ASD who were appointed through the national solidarity and national education sectors in the province for the 2025–2026 school year were selected, and detailed information and data about them were collected. The study also relied on participant observation, clinical interviews, and the Psychological Immune System Inventory developed by Oláh et al. (2012). The findings indicated a positive impact of school life assistants on raising the level of psychological immunity among mothers of children with ASD.

Keywords: school life assistants; psychological immunity; autism spectrum

1. Introduction

No human being is free from weakness; weakness is part of human nature, as evidenced by the Holy Qur'an, in which Allah, the Exalted, says: "Allah wants to lighten your burden, for humankind was created weak" (Qur'an 4:28). Human beings therefore seek refuge in their Lord, turn to Him, and rely on Him, with complete certainty that the Qur'an contains verses of healing, remedy, and blessing, and that its verses also offer protection, preservation, safeguarding, and prevention to all who seek them.

Hawkins (2016), writing about the path to surrender, presented a technique that activates the individual's innate capacities for health, well-being, success, happiness, creativity, and inner peace. These capacities exist within every person and do not depend on particular external circumstances or on a set of personal traits, because inner peace belongs to the human self when it returns to its natural psychological state. To cope with life's fluctuations, with its problems, pressures, crises, and frustrations, simple and effective means are used to rid oneself of negative emotions and to be free of them through the technique of letting go, or surrender, a realistic system that works to eliminate obstacles. Research has shown it to be more effective than other techniques that aim to reduce the physiological reaction to stress. There are three ways of dealing with negative emotions: suppression, expression, and escape. In the first step, individuals allow themselves to feel, without resisting, fleeing, or fearing the feeling and without trying to refine it, since it is merely a feeling. The second step is to express these feelings, and the last is to find an outlet through which to escape them in order to be rid of them (Hawkins, 2016, p. 17).

Dhaval (2022) adds that a new idea for confronting mental health problems is psychological immunity, which refers to immunity against an individual's mental health problems. The mind and the body are closely interconnected and work together, and a deficiency in the immune system shapes the way the body responds to it. A person's psychological and social states can therefore have direct effects on the immune system; conversely, a positive attitude and a good mood are associated with a greater capacity of the immune system to fight disease.

Agramia (2023) notes that, given the many stressors they encounter, individuals need a sufficient degree of resistance to maintain psychological balance. In light of life's challenges and the rapid advances in the economic,

intellectual, cultural, and social domains, individuals now face numerous confrontations, crises, and difficulties that expose them to stress and tension and generate feelings of anxiety, frustration, and depression. What, then, if an individual lives in a family in which one member is a child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), with particular demands and special needs? In this regard, Shelly (2015) states that life stress is any difficult situation that a family faces in its daily life because of the presence of a child with a disability, which compels the family to make desperate efforts, whether positive or negative, in an attempt to cope with the accompanying challenges (Agramia, 2023, p. 42).

Over the last decade, a marked change has emerged in the understanding of the family's role in supporting persons with special needs, with growing attention to health, psychological, and educational care as well as vocational guidance, in application of the provisions of Law No. 25-01 of 20 February 2025 on the protection and promotion of persons with special needs, in particular Article 19.

School life is, in reality, a miniature of social life, in which various partners take part at appropriate times and places under the supervision of a multidisciplinary educational team, with the aim of fostering the learner's personal development. Hamidaoui (2015) adds that school life is that which brings happiness to the student in any form and guarantees the student's rights and duties; its aspects are defined by removing whatever obstructs it, materially and morally, and stands as a barrier between the learner and the educational process, together with the participation of all stakeholders and the delivery of services.

Accordingly, the national solidarity sector, represented by the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs, has paid considerable attention to improving the schooling of children with special needs, including children with ASD, by adopting a series of practical measures and arrangements and steps that must be respected and followed.

School life assistants are qualified individuals who accompany students with ASD in a mainstream school environment. They serve as a link between the student with ASD, the teacher, and the student's family, and they help the student to integrate socially with peers and to adapt, with the aim of enabling the student to reach the greatest possible degree of understanding and integration. The present study therefore seeks to determine whether the school life assistants assigned to students with ASD influence the level of psychological immunity among their mothers.

2. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in the following:

1. Identifying the legal measures and regulations that must be adopted in order to integrate students with ASD into the mainstream school setting alongside their peers.
2. Clarifying the role of school life assistants in accompanying students with ASD.
3. Determining whether the role performed by the school life assistant influences the level of psychological immunity among mothers of students with ASD.

3. Objectives of the Study

The present study aims to:

1. Identify the arrangements governing the enrollment and placement of children with ASD in the regular classes opened within national education institutions, in accordance with the legal procedures in force.
2. Highlight the main facilities provided by the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs in the care and follow-up of children with special needs, including children with ASD.
3. Determine the effect of accompanying children with ASD in school life on the level of psychological immunity among their mothers.

4. School Life Assistants

School life assistants are persons who enjoy full civil rights and hold an educational qualification that enables them to accompany students with ASD. They are proposed by the guardians of these students, who express their wish that their children be accompanied by assistants of their own choosing, particularly from among their close relatives, in applications submitted to the Department for the Protection and Promotion of Persons with Special Needs at the Directorate of Social Activity and Solidarity, under the authority of the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs. The appointment is made for one full year and is renewable.

5. Statistical Data on Children With ASD in Ouargla Province for the 2025–2026 School Year

The situation of persons with special needs has been under continuous improvement and reform, and it has been one of the state's priorities since national sovereignty was regained. This has been reinforced by legislative arrangements built around two main axes: on the one hand, prevention through early diagnosis, and on the other, the establishment of a system of integration and social protection aimed at improving the social and occupational well-being of persons with special needs.

A total of 1,053 children, adolescents, and students with special needs were received in Ouargla Province. Of these, 375 children and adolescents were under institutional care, distributed across four private and public specialized education and teaching institutions under the authority of the national solidarity sector. These comprised 365 children, adolescents, and students in specialized education and teaching institutions—151 children and adolescents at Psycho-Pedagogical Center No. 1 for Children With Special Needs and Intellectual Disabilities (El-Moudjahid Aissani El-Hadj), 133 at Psycho-Pedagogical Center No. 2 for Children With Special Needs and Intellectual Disabilities (El-Moudjahid Chakli Kaddour), and 81 students at the School for Children With Special Needs and Hearing Impairments (El-

Moudjahid Kebaili Mohamed Essafi)—in addition to 10 children at the private medical-social institution Eden. Further, 250 children and adolescents were enrolled at the Beni Thour Association of Parents of Children With Intellectual Disabilities, and 184 students attended special classes under the authority of the national solidarity sector. In addition, 218 students with special needs were integrated into regular classes in the province's national education sector.

6. Measures and Arrangements for the Schooling and Orientation of Children With ASD and Regulatory Procedures for Appointing School Life Assistants

Regarding the measures and arrangements for the schooling and training of children with special needs, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs stated that the success of the effort to provide optimal care for this group—who must be given the same schooling opportunities as their typically developing peers—can be achieved only through continuous and regular coordination and partnership with the services of the various sectors concerned by these measures and arrangements, and through implementation of the provisions of Joint Ministerial Circular No. 01 of 3 September 2019 issued by the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs, the Ministry of Vocational Training and Education, and the Ministry of Health, Population and Hospital Reform.

The Director of Specialized and Private Education at the Ministry of National Education adds, in Instruction No. 204 of 24 November 2021 on accompanying students with special needs during class assignments and term examinations, that this instruction implements Prime Minister's Instruction No. 141 of 9 September 2021 on the school entry of children with autism spectrum disorder. It was issued in application of the measures set out in the ministerial circular containing the arrangements for school accompaniment and as a supplement to the Secretary-General's Instruction No. 1500 of 19 September 2021 on the school accompaniment of children with special needs, particularly children with autism. Accompaniment accordingly extends to supporting the student in completing assignments and examinations (explaining the questions, clarifying the instructions and what is required of the student, etc.), provided that the companion neither dictates answers to the student nor completes the exercises on the student's behalf, so as to ensure equal opportunities among students.

The Directorate of Social Activity and Solidarity examines the files of children with special needs before the specialized provincial commission or the psycho-pedagogical board in order to determine the appropriate form of care and to direct children toward specialized institutions, special classes, or regular classes after the examinations that each case requires. To improve the quality of care and orientation, the Directorate of Social Activity has sought to activate the Provincial Commission for Special Education and Vocational Guidance, established under Executive Decree No. 03-333 of 8 October 2003.

The files of all children with special needs proposed for institutional integration or for school placement in special or regular classes are examined by the Provincial Commission for Special Education and Vocational Guidance. Where the condition of a child with a disability or disorder so requires, in accordance with a medical report confirming the opinion of the treating physician, and pursuant to Ministerial Correspondence No. 908 of 21 September 2021 on the appointment of school life assistants—in which the Secretary-General of the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs stressed the need to provide every condition that would allow appropriate care for children with ASD and to grant these students every facility available to their peers—the guardian submits the file of the child concerned to the Directorate of Social Activity and Solidarity, Department for the Protection and Promotion of Persons with Special Needs, so that a companion may be assigned to the child.

In this regard, he adds that, with respect to the authorization requests submitted by guardians of students with ASD in which they express the wish that their children be accompanied by assistants of their own choosing, all necessary measures must be taken to favor this arrangement by allowing applicants to propose the companions they select, particularly from among their close relatives, while in all cases safeguarding the best interests of the child. The guardian's file must contain the following documents: a written request bearing the guardian's address and telephone number; two passport-size photographs of the child concerned; the child's birth certificate; a residence certificate; a copy of the guardian's national identity card; a civil status certificate; a school certificate for the child; a medical report; a copy of the disability card; a copy of the companion's national identity card; and the companion's school certificate and/or diploma. After the request has been examined by the Provincial Commission for Special Education and Vocational Guidance or by the psycho-pedagogical board, the Directorate of Social Activity and Solidarity appoints the companion by means of a decision of accompaniment, signed by the Director of Social Activity and the Director of Education, authorizing the companion to enter the school in which the student concerned is enrolled.

Pursuant to Executive Decree No. 03-333 of 8 October 2003 on the Provincial Commission for Special Education and Vocational Guidance and Provincial Decision No. 146 of 2 February 2020 renewing the Provincial Commission for Special Education and Vocational Guidance of Ouargla Province, a meeting chaired by the Director of Social Activity and Solidarity is held at the Directorate's headquarters, at which the Provincial Commission examines and approves the admission of the school life assistant. After the file of the child to be accompanied has been examined, authorization is granted by means of a time-limited decision conferring the status of school life assistant, signed by the Director of Social Activity and Solidarity and the Provincial Director of Education.

For school life assistants to succeed in their work, they must have comprehensive and accurate knowledge of the conditions governing the exercise of their duties within the classroom, with the school's teaching staff, and with the

family. They are also obliged to comply with the school's rules and internal regulations, to maintain their standing within the classroom, and to exercise the judgment needed to intervene at the right moment in order to help the child they accompany, enabling the child to communicate better with peers, to break the shackles of isolation, and to engage more fully with society.

7. The Impact of School Life Assistants on Raising the Level of Psychological Immunity Among Mothers of Children With ASD

Following the issuance of the Joint Ministerial Circular of 3 September 2019, which sets out the measures and arrangements for the schooling and training of children with special needs, in particular the arrangements for accompaniment, and the document issued by the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs on the appointment of school life assistants for students with ASD enrolled in regular classes, the Directorate of Social Activity and Solidarity, in accordance with the decisions of the Provincial Commission for Special Education and Vocational Guidance, has granted authorizations for school life accompaniment. Over these years, a considerable improvement has been observed in the educational level of students with ASD in regular classes who were granted accompaniment authorizations.

This also follows the Secretary-General's Instruction No. 1022 of 17 June 2018 on the exceptional procedure for students with special needs, which rests on Ministerial Decision No. 57 of 22 March 2018 establishing an exceptional procedure for transition from primary to middle school and from middle to secondary school for students with special educational needs. In application of the principles of equity and equal opportunity among all students and of positive discrimination, every student who achieves, in continuous assessment, an overall annual average equal to or above 10/20 (fourth-year middle school students) or equal to or above 05/10 (fifth-year primary school students), and who belongs to the category of students with sensory disabilities (blind, deaf, and mute) or intellectual disabilities (trisomy 21) or to students with autism disorder, is admitted, after reference to the student's health file and confirmation of the disability or disorder by the legally authorized bodies. This is in recognition of the additional effort these students make despite their disability or disorder and to encourage them to continue their studies, as confirmed by the annual reports and final academic results. It is also the product of the efforts and initiatives aimed at optimally improving the schooling of persons with special needs through continuous coordination between the school and the family.

The school life assistant serves as a link between the student and the student's family with respect to educational, relational, and instructional matters, and the assistant's role consists of:

1. Accompanying the student on entering the school and the classroom and when moving between the school's facilities;
2. Helping the student to organize his or her work;
3. Helping the student to complete learning tasks (writing, note-taking, drawing, simplifying and explaining the questions asked, clarifying what the teacher requires, participating in group work, etc.);
4. Accompanying the student during physical education and sports activities;
5. Accompanying the student during recess and intervening when an emergency involving the student arises; and
6. Accompanying the student in cultural, sports, and recreational activities and on field trips.

Taken together, these roles have contributed to the optimal improvement of the accompaniment of these students, an effect that depends on the combined efforts made and is supported by the regulations enacted by the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs and the Ministry of National Education.

This was confirmed by the analysis of the final assessment results, which showed that accompaniment improved the academic level of these students, in addition to the role of optimal pedagogical management. Because school life requires all members of the educational team to join forces in order to activate and energize this process, so that the child is able to face the challenges encountered in social life, the results achieved by enrolled students in examinations, particularly official examinations, have continued to improve compared with previous years. This improvement was made possible by a set of regulations and arrangements and by the cooperation and combined efforts of the institutions and the teaching staff, each in their own area of expertise. It was also the fruit of the training courses that preceded this process for school life assistants, conducted under the supervision and direction of Professor Nadia Boudiaf, Director of the Laboratory of Quality of Programs in Special Education and Adapted Teaching at Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla, and a member of the Provincial Commission for Special Education and Vocational Guidance, in accordance with the terms of a framework agreement between Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla, and the Directorate of Social Activity and Solidarity.

The Secretary-General of the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs likewise confirmed this in Joint Ministerial Circular No. 01 of 3 September 2019, issued by the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs, the Ministry of Vocational Training and Education, and the Ministry of Health, Population and Hospital Reform, particularly in Clause 5 on the arrangements for accompaniment. The success of school life assistants in their tasks depends on the support they receive from the family and the teaching staff of the educational institution; their presence is intended to overcome the barriers that hinder the schooling of students with a disorder or disability and to ensure equal learning opportunities for all students. Among the aims of these training courses is to train school life assistants in the principles of adapting educational programs and curricula and in adapted

methods for developing these students' abilities, achieving a happy life at school, leading the student toward self-reliance, providing the student with sufficient knowledge, safeguarding the student's health and safety, and teaching the student skills and readiness, in addition to urging school life assistants to align their values, abilities, and behaviors with the demands of this post and to strengthen their capacities.

In achieving these results, assistants encounter a number of difficulties, which were identified through semi-structured interviews with school life assistants and with the head of office who represents the education sector on the Provincial Commission for Special Education and Vocational Guidance and is responsible for following this file. They include the following:

1. Difficulties related to school administration

- Assignment of the school life assistant to administrative work, owing to ignorance of the duties entrusted to the assistant.
- Rejection of the assistant's presence by some school principals and teachers, because the assistant acts as an observer of every detail.
- The absence of a practical guide clarifying the assistant's working methodology and the organizational procedures.
- Failure to recognize the school life assistant as a member of the educational team.
- Insubordination by some school life assistants in applying the institution's internal regulations.
- The problem of having two or more companions in a single classroom.

2. Difficulties related to school life assistants

- The absence of training in the field of disability in general, and in ASD in particular, before appointment.
- The absence of a practical guide for handling difficult cases and for teaching social skills.
- Lack of acceptance of the job: the companion is looking for employment first, whatever it may be, with income as the main concern.
- Not receiving adequate pay for the work performed.
- Refusal to perform the assigned duties fully, on the grounds that the pay is insufficient.

3. Difficulties related to the student with ASD

- Failure to take into account the particular circumstances of the student concerned, with the assistant imposed on the student without any preparation.
- The absence of curricula suited to the needs of the student with ASD.
- Difficulty in accepting, understanding, and adapting to the school life assistant.
- The assistant's inability to convey information to the student concerned.
- Difficulty adjusting to a new companion when the companion or the school changes for one reason or another.

4. Difficulties related to the school environment

- The problem of bullying and the student's lack of acceptance in the school environment.
- The absence of psychological, speech-language, and educational intervention and of coordination with specialists.
- The educational team's ignorance of ASD and its nature.
- The lack of educational aids and pedagogical supports that would facilitate the assistant's work.

5. Difficulties related to the family of the student with ASD

- The absence of the family's role and its complete abdication, placing responsibility for the child's schooling on the assistant.
- Expecting positive results as soon as an assistant is appointed for their children.
- Mothers' wish to be the companions themselves and their rejection of any assistant out of fear for their children.
- Imposing illogical rules on the assistant and treating the assistant as a servant who obeys orders without discussion.
- The severe shortage of companions, which sends guardians on a search for a school life assistant.
- Regarding the assistant as a substitute for school tutoring or as a savior in examinations, without regard for the student's academic achievement.

Psychological immunity is an important requirement that every individual seeks to attain, especially mothers of children with ASD, given everything that this group entails; it is through psychological immunity that they are able to confront problems and overcome them. Kagan (2006) states that psychological immunity is a dynamic, changing affective system that enables individuals to use their feelings and abilities to distinguish between what is beneficial, harmful, and neutral, through memory and the capacity for imagination, planning, risk assessment, protection or defense, perception of life's reinforcers, and the formulation of action plans for the prevention and protection of life, physical integrity, identity, and creativity.

When a mother receives support of various kinds, she takes part positively in the care of her child with ASD in the training and education aspects. The child can then be directed to a special class in which other parties intervene, including the child's pedagogical companion in the autism situation, the school life assistant. Algeria is among the

countries that have authorized such assistants to perform their duties within the classroom in the mainstream school, even though some officials regard the student with ASD as a negative element and a distraction for typically developing students and categorically reject the presence of an assistant for the student, which disrupts the educational process in school life (Chelihi, 2018, p. 2).

8. Method and Instruments

8.1 Study Method

The study population comprises two hundred thirty-one (231) mothers of children with ASD registered with the national solidarity and education sectors in the province. Given this population, the method best suited to achieving the study's goals and answering its questions was the one adopted by the researchers: the descriptive method, using a correlational design (individual case studies). We began by selecting the mothers of children with ASD enrolled in regular classes in national education institutions in Ouargla Province, who numbered 92, and detailed information and data on them were collected. Particular attention was given to mothers of children with ASD enrolled in regular classes who had obtained school life accompaniment decisions. Several research tools were also employed, including participant observation and the clinical interview, together with the study of documents and data relating to the study sample, in order to test the hypotheses and to determine the impact of school life assistants on raising the level of psychological immunity among mothers of children with autism.

Table 1: Number of Children and Students With Autism Spectrum Disorder Under Care

Institution / class type		Number of students	Total
Psycho-Pedagogical Center No. 1 for Children With Special Needs and Intellectual Disabilities (El-Moudjahid Aissani El-Hadj)		29	49
Psycho-Pedagogical Center No. 2 for Children With Special Needs and Intellectual Disabilities (El-Moudjahid Chakli Kaddour)		20	
Special classes		77	77
Regular classes	Primary stage	64	92
	Middle stage	26	
	Secondary stage	14	

Note. Source: National Solidarity and Education Sectors, Ouargla Province.

8.2 Study Boundaries

The boundaries of the present study were as follows:

Spatial Boundaries

The study was conducted in the national solidarity sector, represented by the Directorate of Social Activity and Solidarity, Department for the Protection and Promotion of Persons with Special Needs, in coordination with the national education sector in Ouargla Province.

Temporal Boundaries

Data collection on the main study sample and the analytical processing needed to answer the questions raised in the study took one full school year (2025–2026), from the start of the school year until its end.

8.3 Study Sample

The sample was selected purposively, drawing a total of fifty-four (54) mothers of children from the study population, as suited to the present research. The characteristics of the sample were as follows:

- Their children had been diagnosed with ASD.
- All were from the city of Ouargla and from comparable social backgrounds.
- Ages ranged from 27 to 63 years.
- School life assistants had been appointed for the children of twenty-seven (27) of the mothers (Group A), in accordance with applications for authorization to grant school life assistants.
- The remaining twenty-seven (27) mothers (Group B) had children with ASD enrolled in regular classes for whom no assistant had been appointed, because the guardians did not wish to have one.

8.4 Observation and Clinical Interview

These two tools were used to gather sufficient information about the study cases, to collect clinical indicators of the level of psychological immunity, and to learn about the role played by school life assistants and the main procedures and regulations in force in this regard.

8.5 The Psychological Immune System Inventory (Oláh et al., 2012)

Description of the Scale

The Psychological Immune System Inventory consists of 80 items. It was translated and adapted by the researcher Alaa Al-Sharif (2015) and comprises sixteen (16) dimensions, distributed across three subsystems according to their main psychological functions:

First: The Approach-Monitoring Subsystem

This subsystem includes the following dimensions: positive thinking, sense of coherence, sense of control, sense of self-growth, orientation toward change, challenge, social monitoring, and goal orientation.

Second: The Creation-Implementation Subsystem

This subsystem includes the following dimensions: self-creativity (problem-solving), self-efficacy, social mobilization capacity, and creation of social capacity.

Third: The Self-Regulation Subsystem

This subsystem includes the following dimensions: synchronicity, impulse control, affect regulation, and irritability control.

The mean response scores are interpreted according to the following cut-off scores:

- 0–79: low immunity
- 80–159: moderate immunity
- 160–239: high immunity

9. Results and Discussion**9.1 Presentation of Results****Table 2 : Overall Results for the Study Sample**

Group A		Group B		Psychological immunity level	
No.	Total score	No.	Total score	Group A	Group B
01	87	01	152	Moderate	Moderate
02	166	02	76	High	Low
03	95	03	173	Moderate	High
04	167	04	94	High	Moderate
05	53	05	205	Low	High
06	146	06	55	Moderate	Low
07	170	07	125	High	Moderate
08	66	08	113	Low	Moderate
09	214	09	39	High	Low
10	203	10	214	High	High
11	116	11	110	Moderate	Moderate
12	134	12	128	Moderate	Moderate
13	167	13	81	High	Moderate
14	213	14	66	High	Low
15	129	15	58	Moderate	Low
16	196	16	204	High	High
17	217	17	142	High	Moderate
18	72	18	69	Low	Low
19	221	19	59	High	Low
20	107	20	65	Moderate	Low
21	54	21	88	Low	Moderate
22	147	22	43	Moderate	Low
23	59	23	118	Low	Moderate
24	123	24	174	Moderate	High
25	209	25	76	High	Low
26	93	26	192	Moderate	High
27	163	27	48	High	Low

Note. Group A = mothers whose children had a school life assistant; Group B = mothers whose children had no school life assistant. Cut-off scores: 0–79 = low; 80–159 = moderate; 160–239 = high.

Table 3 : Levels of Psychological Immunity Among the Study Sample

Group	Low		Moderate		High	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Group A	05	18.52%	09	33.33%	13	48.15%
Group B	11	40.74%	10	37.04%	06	22.22%

Note. f = frequency.

9.2 Analysis and Interpretation of Results

Quantitative analysis was performed on the results obtained from the psychological immunity scale administered to the study sample of fifty-four (54) mothers of children with ASD. Twenty-seven (27) of these mothers had been granted authorization for accompaniment in school life (a school life accompaniment decision), and twenty-seven (27) had not applied for authorization for their children to be accompanied in school life. As Tables 2 and 3 show, the results of the two groups, Group A and Group B, diverged. The percentage frequency of low psychological immunity

was 18.52% in the first group, compared with 40.74% in the second. Moderate psychological immunity was 33.33% in the first group, compared with 37.04% in the second, and high psychological immunity was 48.15% in the first group, compared with 22.22% in the second. This indicates that Group A had higher psychological immunity than Group B.

This finding is consistent with earlier research. Adel (2019, as cited in Ibrahim et al., 2025) confirmed a positive correlation between psychological immunity and perceived family resilience factors among mothers of children with intellectual disabilities. Gohar (2021, as cited in Ibrahim et al., 2025) pointed to a significant positive correlational relationship between psychological immunity and psychological well-being among mothers of children with special needs. Qurayshi (2022, as cited in Ibrahim et al., 2025) found that both psychological stress and psychological immunity were prevalent among mothers at a moderate level, with a negative correlation between psychological immunity and psychological stress (Ibrahim et al., 2025, p. 695).

The results obtained in the present study likewise confirm the positive effect of social support, represented by the school life assistant, on the level of psychological immunity among mothers of children with ASD.

10. Conclusion

The introduction of the school life companion is a recent development in our education system, and pending the issuance of a text that regulates this aspect, school principals and teachers should facilitate the companion's mission and help the companion perform it by providing suitable working conditions, so that the student being accompanied can attend school normally. This was confirmed by the Secretary-General of the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs in Instruction No. 783 of 15 July 2026 on the procedures and arrangements for preparing the 2026–2027 school year.

For any regulation or arrangement to have a positive effect, a set of foundations and procedures must be in place that allow it to succeed. These include awareness-raising among families and in the school environment through training days, lectures, and seminars; activation of the role of parents' associations and of associations active in the field of disability; and follow-up within a community framework, through meetings with stakeholders and the definition of action strategies and proposals that regulate the care process, with the aim of turning an idea or opinion into a concrete reality that serves the goal of sustainable development.

This is also what was indicated by the ministerial correspondence of 10 July 2025 on the 2025–2026 school year, in the guide to the procedures and arrangements for preparing the school year. These must be implemented in order to improve the quality of services provided to our children with special needs in specialized institutions, in special classes opened within the mainstream school environment, in specialized centers run by associations, and in specialized centers established by private individuals, in addition to training trainers and raising their professional performance. Particularly relevant is the fourth axis, concerning integration into the mainstream school environment, which includes a clause exempting guardians from renewing the authorization for the school life companion to enter the educational institution when the same companion is involved, in accordance with the framework circular on the school year issued by the Ministry of National Education under No. 1285 of 19 July 2022. It is therefore necessary to recognize, socially and legally, the important role of the school life assistant in the mainstream school environment; to identify the main difficulties in order to correct and remedy them; and to activate education, awareness-raising, and sensitization for both parents and the educational team in families and schools.

This is all the more necessary given the effective role played by the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs in attending to this group, through the opening of specialized national centers for children with ASD and the launch of a national awareness campaign, in application of Instruction No. 962 of 27 July 2026 of the Secretary-General of the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs on launching an awareness campaign to detect the symptoms of ASD, in addition to supportive mechanisms and procedures in this regard.

Appendix: Tables and Figures

Table A1: Number of Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder for the 2026–2027 School Year

Institution	Number of students
Psycho-Pedagogical Center No. 1 for Children With Special Needs and Intellectual Disabilities (El-Moudjahid Aissani El-Hadj)	29
Psycho-Pedagogical Center No. 2 for Children With Special Needs and Intellectual Disabilities (El-Moudjahid Chakli Kaddour)	20
Private Medical-Social Institution Eden	06
Beni Thour Association of Parents of Children With Intellectual Disabilities	07
Special classes	77

Note. Source: Documents issued by the Directorate of Social Activity and Solidarity of Ouargla Province and the Directorate of Education of Ouargla Province.

Legal and Regulatory Texts Cited

- Secretary-General's Instruction No. 1886 of 17 June 2018 on exceptional procedures for students with special educational needs.
- Prime Minister's Instruction No. 141 of 9 September 2021 on the school entry of children with autism spectrum disorder.

- Joint Ministerial Circular No. 01 of 3 September 2019, restating the measures and arrangements for the schooling and training of children with special needs.
- Secretary-General's Instruction No. 1500 of 19 September 2021 on the school accompaniment of students with special needs.
- Instruction No. 204 of 24 November 2021 of the Director of Specialized and Private Education at the Ministry of National Education, on accompanying students with special needs during class assignments and term examinations.
- Correspondence No. 1054 of 4 September 2019 from the Secretary-General of the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs, on the measures and arrangements for the schooling and training of children with special needs.
- Joint Ministerial Decision of 13 March 2014 specifying the modalities for opening special classes for children with disabilities within public education institutions of the national education sector.
- Provincial Decision No. 146 of 2 February 2020 renewing the Provincial Commission for Special Education and Vocational Guidance.
- Provincial Decision No. 99 of 13 October 2022 renewing the specialized provincial commission, referred to in the text as "the Specialized Commission."
- Instruction No. 908 of 21 September 2021 of the Secretary-General of the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs, on school life assistants.
- Executive Decree No. 03-333 of 8 October 2003 on the Provincial Commission for Special Education and Vocational Guidance.
- Instruction No. 1222 of 3 November 2020 of the Secretary-General of the Ministry of National Education, on the schooling of children with special needs in education institutions.
- Law No. 25-01 of 20 February 2025 on the protection and promotion of persons with special needs.

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