Abstract

The experiences of parents as their children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) transition to Kindergarten is lacking in the literature. This study asked, “How do parents of children with ASD make meaning of their children’s transition to Kindergarten?” and “How do the stories of the teachers help inform the transition experiences?” Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four parents and one teacher. Thematic and structural narrative analytic methods revealed that parents made sense of their children’s Kindergarten transition experience by positioning themselves as agents who were actively seeking out belonging in the school community. Three subthemes were identified: adapting to the culture of the school, building trusting relationships with teachers, and emerging identities and hope. Findings are conceptualized using Rimm-Kaufman and Pianta’s (2000) Ecological and Dynamic Model of Transition. Counselling implications include helping clients overcome isolation, using narrative therapy approaches to explore alternative plot lines and identity, and facilitating parent groups.

Keywords: Autism Spectrum Disorder; Kindergarten transition; ecological framework; narrative inquiry; counselling; special education