

INTRODUCTION

- Transition planning with schools is required by age 16 for special education students in the US.
 - Transition plans include academic, social, daily living, extracurricular, and career goals.
- However, transition services are under-resourced and autistic students and their families approach graduation feeling unprepared for what is next.
- To enhance success, Emory Autism Center (EAC) has been training teachers in transition programming and has relationships with several school districts.

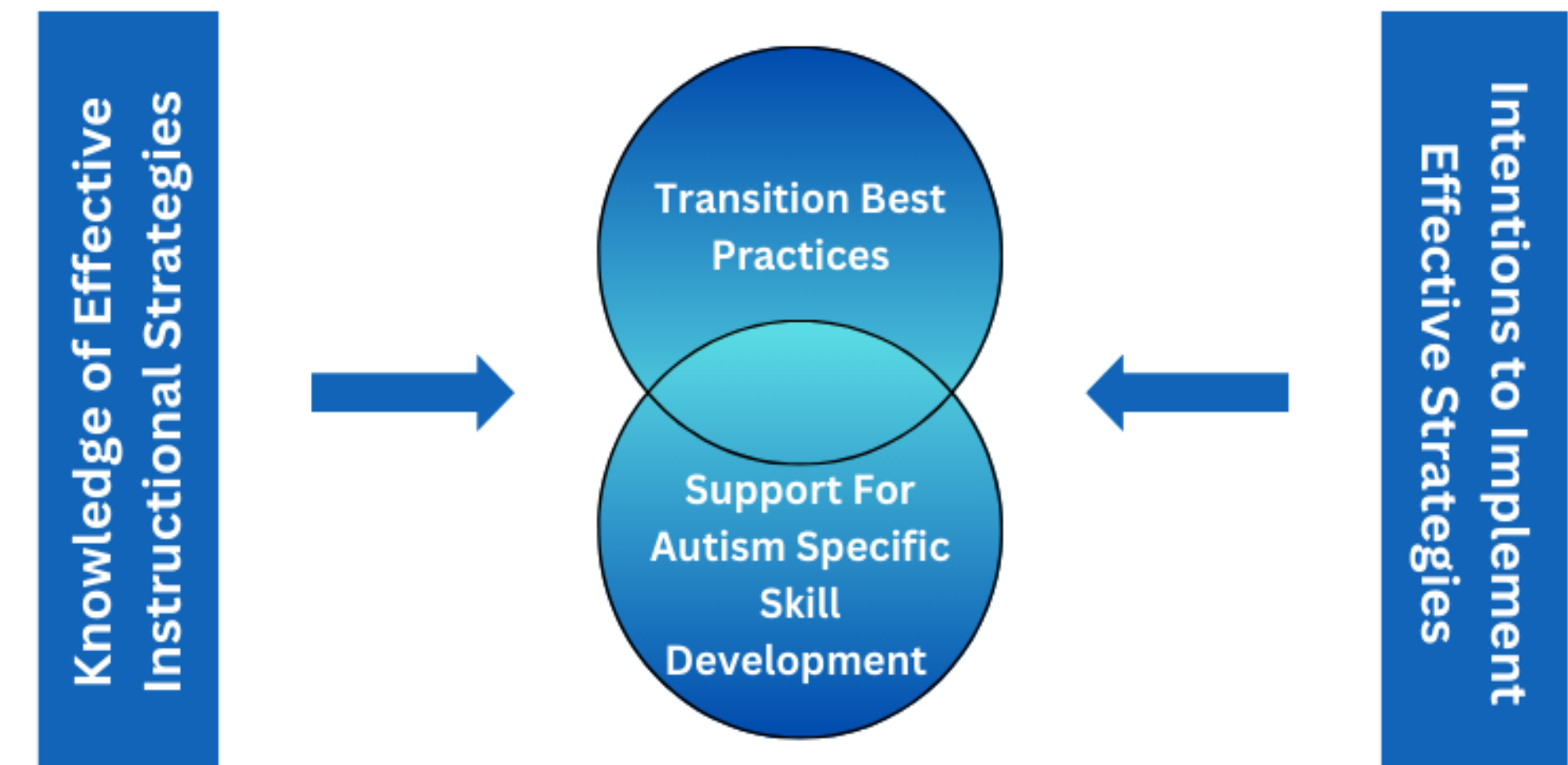
OBJECTIVES

1. Determine the challenges and barriers educators face when working with transition-age autistic students.
2. Understand the supports that educators need to best address the transition-related needs of autistic students.

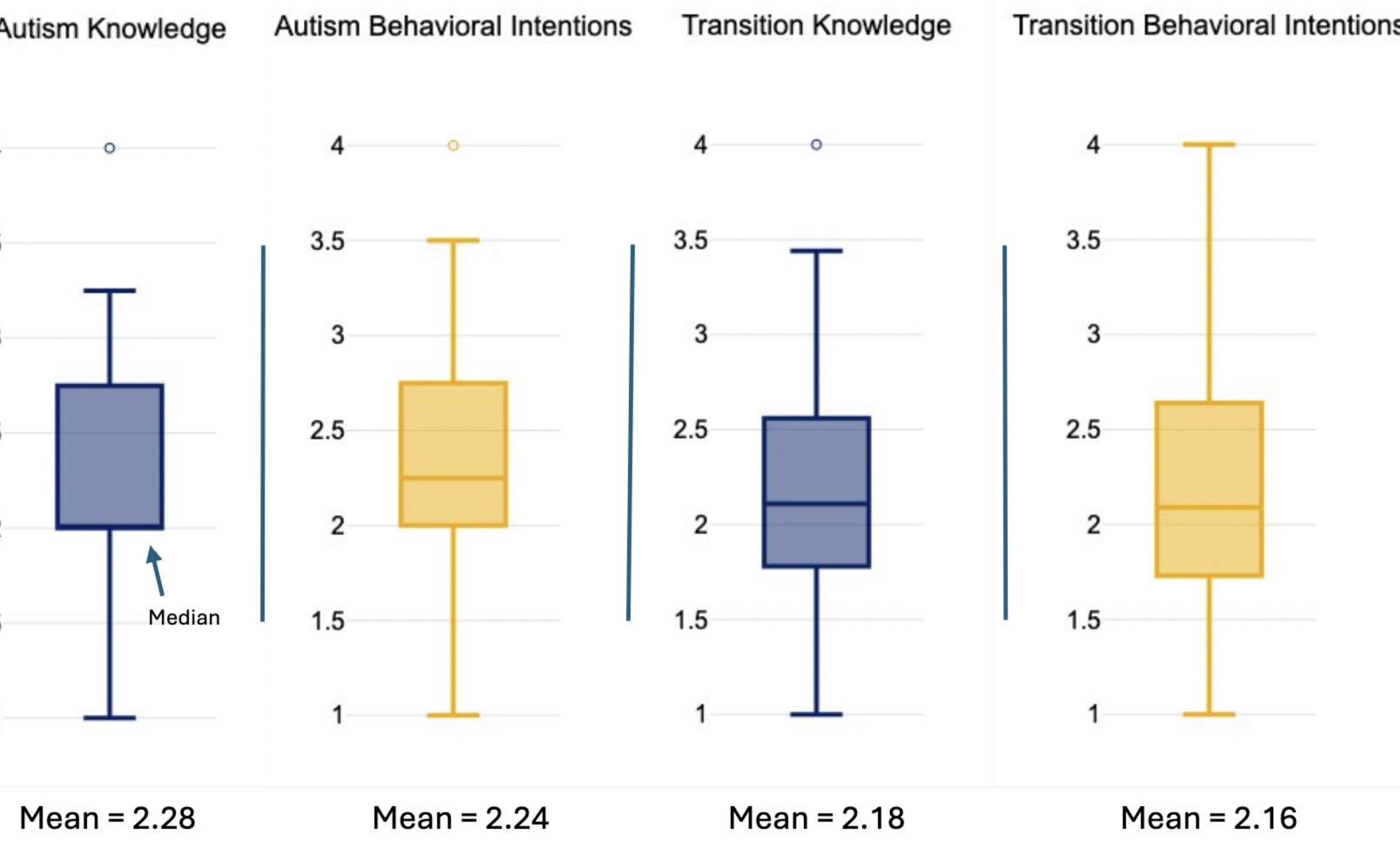
METHODS

- Educators (n = 54; age range 25-65) who have received training in autism transition services
 - From Atlanta, US metro area
- Quantitative analysis of two question domains regarding autism-related instructional strategies and general transition-related instructional strategies.
- Qualitative thematic analysis of 3 open-ended questions using NVIVO by 2 independent raters.

QUESTION DOMAINS



QUANTITATIVE RESULTS



Educators engaged in providing transition services in high schools self-report

- a *basic-level knowledge* regarding transition best practices as well as autism specific transition supports
- a *low- to moderate level of motivation* to fulfill transition-based activities



Educator Knowledge of Autism Transition and Perspectives on the Supports Required to Address Needs of Autistic Students

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To prepare students for optimal post-secondary success, transition educators report that they need time, training, and collaboration across the community.

Scan the QR code for an online copy of the poster!



QUALITATIVE RESULTS

What Educators are Saying About:

1 STUDENT CHALLENGES	QUOTES
Need for executive functioning - independence, confidence, self-advocacy	"Self-advocacy, beginning with self-awareness (What do I need to be successful?) up to negotiating specific details with employment, education, or training institutes (I need X accommodation, how do I get it here?)"
Need for social skills	
Need for student involvement in transition goals and IEP	
2 COLLABORATORS	
Need for collaborators to provide opportunities and support a sense of preparedness via real world experience	"Work-based learning opportunities, career awareness activities, business & industry tours, and pre-employment skills training."
Need for support from family, school psychologists, and others to implement transition goals	
3 COMMUNITY/EMPLOYERS	
Need for community or employer knowledge of autism and support	"Finding community partners and businesses who are willing and able to provide employment for these students."
4 EDUCATOR CHALLENGES	
Need for time to work toward goals during school day	"There is not enough time at school to be able to sit down with a student and have a conversation about transitioning after high school."
Need for training to improve transition goal writing and implementation	
5 POST-SECONDARY SUCCESS	
Need for meaningful job or post-secondary education, as well as the ability to live independently	"For our students to successfully live as independently as possible and to find fulfilling work that meets their skill sets."

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

- Teachers need more time in the school day to address transition goals with students.
- Teachers would benefit from additional training and support to develop meaningful transition programming.
- Collaboration with a variety of stakeholders (parents, community members, state agencies) is essential.
- Employers and community providers are encouraged to create a safe and inclusive environment for autistic students.
- Educators should provide opportunities for students so they can improve communication skills and learn to advocate for their goals.

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