

Autism Wellbeing Survey

Executive Summary

At Proof Positive, we believe in a simple but transformative truth: autistic individuals deserve not only support and services but also lives filled with joy, meaning, and connection. Our latest national research confirms that the autism community overwhelmingly agrees that the time to prioritize wellbeing is now.

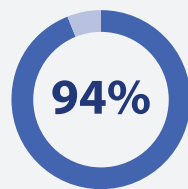
In partnership with Pathfinder Opinion Research, Proof Positive conducted one of the most comprehensive studies to date exploring perceptions of wellbeing within the autism community. The research included in-depth interviews, focus groups, and a national survey of more than 1,000 autistic individuals, caregivers, educators, and service providers across the United States.

The findings reveal both a significant opportunity and an urgent challenge. Across every stakeholder group, wellbeing emerged as the top priority for autistic individuals. Wellbeing ranked above academics, communication, and self-care. While support systems widely believe they are prioritizing wellbeing, autistic individuals often perceive a significant gap between this intention and their lived experience. Practitioners also face meaningful barriers to implementation, including pressure to prioritize functional skills, limited training, lack of measurement tools, and broader systemic constraints.

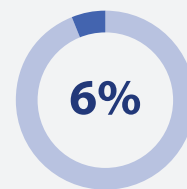
Key Findings at a Glance



Wellbeing ranked #1 across all respondent groups as the most important priority for autistic individuals.



94% of respondents say prioritizing wellbeing in autism services and support is **“absolutely essential”** or **“very important.”**



Only 6% of educators and service providers currently use a formal tool to **measure wellbeing.**

39%

Only 39% of autistic individuals say the people supporting them highly prioritize their wellbeing, compared to 89% of caregivers, educators, and providers who believe they do.

53%

of practitioners cite pressure to prioritize academic or functional skills as the biggest barrier to implementing a wellbeing-focused approach.

Executive Summary (continued)

These findings send a clear message: the autism community is ready for a more human-centered, wellbeing-focused approach. As a community, we must modify systems, tools, and support structures to ensure practice prioritizes wellbeing. That is where Proof Positive plays a critical role.

Proof Positive exists to bridge the gap between aspiration and implementation. Rooted in the science of positive psychology, we provide evidence-informed tools, resources, training, and practical strategies designed specifically for the autism community. Our work helps educators, caregivers, providers, and autistic individuals build the skills and environments that support flourishing. Wellbeing is not an “extra,” it is a core component of meaningful support and long-term outcomes.

Taking Action Together

The research validates both the urgency of this work and the field’s readiness for collective action. This moment calls for more than individual efforts. It requires a coordinated movement grounded in partnership, shared learning, and a common commitment to helping the autism community flourish. By aligning around wellbeing as a shared priority, we can build systems that are more compassionate, sustainable, and responsive to the lived experiences of autistic individuals, their families and the communities that support them.

Proof Positive is proud to serve as a convener, collaborator, and catalyst within this growing movement. Through the Autism Wellbeing Alliance, we are helping unite partners across sectors to share resources, elevate evidence-informed practices, and accelerate the integration of wellbeing into everyday environments and support systems. Flourishing should be more than optional or aspirational. Together, we can ensure flourishing is the only acceptable outcome.

Join Our Alliance

Together, we are building a movement where people are empowered to take control of their own wellbeing and promote the wellbeing of others.

