

# SPECIAL DRAGONS

## KARATE FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM AND OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS

Special Dragons classes are taught  
by SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER  
AND BLACK-BELTS

Parents are allowed to  
participate for free.



### LOCATIONS:

- BELLEVILLE
- UNION
- PATERSON
- BERGENFIELD
- JERSEY CITY

[www.SpecialDragonsKarate.org](http://www.SpecialDragonsKarate.org)

973-667-8525

# **Give the Gift That Lasts a Lifetime**

## **SPECIAL DRAGONS THERAPEUTIC KARATE**

*For Children with Autism and Other Special Needs*

### **Why This Program Is Life-Changing**

#### **Improves Eye-Hand Coordination**

Precise drills build sharper focus and timing.

#### **Enhances Motor Control**

Karate movements strengthen balance and physical development.

#### **Boosts Conditioning & Strength**

Safe, fun exercises increase stamina and endurance.

#### **Teaches Discipline & Structure**

Students learn routines, patience, respect, and responsibility.

#### **Supports Sensory Integration**

A structured environment helps children regulate sensory input.

#### **Improves Time-on-Task**

Better focus during class carries over into home and school life.

#### **A Safe Place to Make Friends**

Special Dragons is a warm community where every child belongs.

### **Benefits That Last Forever**

The coordination, motor skills, discipline, confidence, and friendships your child builds in Special Dragons **carry over into daily life and stay with them for a lifetime.**

**Special Dragons is truly the gift that lasts forever.**

## **CONTACT US TODAY!**

**Phone:** (973) 667-8525

**Email:** [Info@SpecialDragonsKarate.org](mailto:Info@SpecialDragonsKarate.org)

**Website:** [www.SpecialDragonsKarate.org](http://www.SpecialDragonsKarate.org)

***Enroll a child you love. Empower them for life.***

Visit Our Website

# Psychology Today

## [Black Belt BrainAutism](#) Can Martial Arts Help Kids on the Autism Spectrum?

Research continues to reveal benefits of martial arts for kids on the spectrum. Posted April 1, 2025 | [Reviewed by Monica Vilhauer Ph.D.](#) [Share](#) [Tweet](#) [Share on Bluesky](#) [Share Email](#) [THE BASICS](#) [What Is Autism?](#) [Take our Autism Test](#) [Find a therapist to help with autism](#)

**Key points** Physical activity is a critical part of development in childhood and beyond. Kids on the autism spectrum can benefit from tailored physical activity training. Martial arts can help cognitive control, motor skills, coordination, social skills, and behavioral problems.

Once upon a time, the idea of kids on the [Autism](#) Spectrum training in martial arts seemed a contradictory idea. I remember vividly a parent bringing her kids to one of my martial arts classes years ago in the hope that what and how I was teaching might help with some of the social impairments, [sensory processing](#), and repetitive behavior patterns that they were experiencing. Especially, she was concerned about some of the issues that were emerging at school with lashing out physically. Although there was almost nothing in the research literature on this, [I was quite hopeful I could help](#). Experimental evidence supporting this to be the case continues to accumulate and was recently summarized by researchers in China and Poland.

Movement is on a spectrum too YanAn Wang, Guoping Qian, Sujie Mao and

Shikun Zhang from Nanjing and Harbin in China and Gdansk, Poland conducted an extensive review and analysis of data in published studies in their paper "[The impact of physical exercise interventions on social, behavioral, and motor skills in children with autism: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials](#)" in *Frontiers in Pediatrics*. This effort focused on research studies on many types of physical activity, not only martial arts, and provides a good summary of the overall importance of movement activities for kids on the Autism spectrum.

These researchers examined data that included research studies on boys and girls with average group ages of 5 to 15 years and physical activities ranging from general movement to stationary cycling, ball sports, and martial arts. Many benefits for behavior across all ages Physical activity had positive effects on various domains across all ages with some differences. Older kids showed significant improvement in flexibility and cognitive control, younger kids had significant improvement in motor skills and coordination, and there were significant enhancements in social skills in preschoolers. Quite importantly, "behavioral problems improved significantly across all age groups" while "Martial arts and ball games were particularly effective in enhancing these domains". The overall conclusion is that "exercise interventions significantly improve flexibility, cognitive control, motor skills, coordination, social skills, and behavioral problems" in kids on the autism spectrum. Further, these researchers suggest that we must think of "exercise interventions as an effective method to enhance multiple abilities in children with ASD and emphasize the importance of designing personalized intervention programs tailored to different ages and needs".

Martial arts for neurodiversity Previously, I've talked about the benefits of martial arts in helping kids on the autism spectrum with [stereotyped behaviors](#) and [communication](#) by emphasizing [holistic and integrated approaches to mindful movement](#) that may influence [sensorimotor interactions](#).

My earlier posts were typically based on results from individual research efforts. I really found this recent summary to be a quite compelling overview of trends in the literature on the benefits of martial arts. article continues after advertisement When I came across this research, it brought me back to that time almost 15 years ago with those 2 kids in my karate class. The training really did help them and it really helped me too. While I was guiding them through martial movement, they taught me a lot about adopting different perspectives and how to be creative in my teaching.

(c) E. Paul Zehr (2025) References Wang Y, Qian G, Mao S, Zhang S. The impact of physical exercise interventions on social, behavioral, and motor skills in children with autism: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials.

Front Pediatr. 2025 Feb 27;13:1475019. doi: 10.3389/fped.2025.1475019. PMID: 40083436; PMCID: PMC11903732. [Share Tweet Share on](#)

[BlueskyShareEmail](#) About the Author [E. Paul Zehr Ph.D.](#), is a sensorimotor neuroscientist and a martial artist of Okinawan, Japanese, and Chinese traditions. His books include [Becoming Batman](#), [Inventing Iron Man](#), [Project Superhero](#), and [Chasing Captain America](#).