

2009 State Autism Profiles

ALASKA

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2000, 222 or 1.25% of children ages 3-21 who received special education services in Alaska have autism. In 2007-2008, 538 or 3.07% of children with disabilities ages 3-21 who received special education services have autism.

Table 1-1: IDEA Part B - Children with Autism in Alaska for 1999-2000 and 2007-2008
(Child Count by Age Group)

	1999-2000	2007-2008
Age 3-5	27	31
Age 6-11	138	249
Age 12-17	53	220
Age 18-21	4	38
Age 6-21	195	507
Age 3-21	222	538

Source: Reported by the State of Alaska in accordance with Section 618 of IDEA to U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs

Table 1-2: IDEA Part B - Children with Disabilities in Alaska for 1999-2000 and 2007-2008
(Child Count by Age Group)

	1999-2000	2007-2008
Age 3-5	1,637	1,954
Age 6-11	8,218	7,827
Age 12-17	7,150	6,876
Age 18-21	686	878
Age 6-21	16,054	15,581
Age 3-21	17,691	17,535

Source: Reported by the State of Alaska in accordance with Section 618 of IDEA to U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs

STATE TASK FORCE

Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education (GCDSE)

Formed in 1977 (Admin. Order 42), the mission of the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education is to create change that improves the lives of Alaskans with disabilities. The 28 members of the committee are appointed by the governor to serve three year terms. Stacey Messerschmidt serves as the chair, and Kathy Allely serves as the health and social services planner III. The members include state legislators, representatives of state agencies and organizations with an interest in disabilities and/or education, self-advocates, and parents or guardians of a child with a disability. The council formed an Ad Hoc Committee on Autism to study the needs of Alaskans with autism. The committee's current action plan calls to explore the use of a Medicaid state plan option to provide needed services to individuals with autism and to consider an increase in the number of specialist trained to provide services to individuals with autism.

http://www.hss.state.ak.us/gcdse/Publications/pdf/autism_policy.pdf

STATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

Alaska does not have a specific health insurance mandate for autism spectrum disorders. Alaska also does not currently have a mental health parity law.

EDUCATION

For a child to be diagnosed with autism and eligible to receive special education services, the student must exhibit a significant developmental disability that affects communication and social interaction. The student must have a need for special facilities, a diagnosis of autism by a physician, and a need for special education services certified by a group of experts. The presence of autism may not be enough to qualify for special education; the student must also demonstrate that special education is needed to ensure academic success.

http://www.eed.state.ak.us/TLS/sped/handbook/Part_III_Eval_Elig.doc#sec1

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OTHER STATE RESOURCES

Alaska Autism Resource Center (AARC)

The AARC is a program of the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) that seeks to promote awareness and support of autism in the communities of Alaska. AARC provides information to families of children with autism and helps to increase the availability of services in the state. Also, the center provides in-service training to school districts and provides information on all aspects of autism spectrum disorders.

http://www.sesa.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1

STATE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR

The Alaska State Legislature meets annually on the fourth Monday in January. Each session can last for no more than 120 consecutive days, unless extended by 2/3 vote. The 2009 legislative session convened on February 3, 2009 and is expected to adjourn on May 14.

<http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/misc/legbranch.php>

Sponsors of Autism Legislation:

None at this time.