

2009 State Autism Profiles CALIFORNIA

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2000, 13,979 or 2.17% of children ages 3-21 who received special education services in California have autism. In 2007-2008, 46,069 or 6.87% of children with disabilities ages 3-21 who received special education services have autism.

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

	1999-2000	2007-2008
Age 3-5	3,422	9,741
Age 6-11	7,467	21,126
Age 12-17	2,528	13,242
Age 18-21	562	1,960
Age 6-21	10,557	36,328
Age 3-21	13,979	46,069

Source: Reported by the State of California 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 California for 1999-2000 and 2007-2008
(Child Count by Age Group)

	1999-2000	2007-2008
Age 3-5	57,651	68,002
Age 6-11	290,935	273,987
Age 12-17	272,010	298,052
Age 18-21	24,691	30,863
Age 6-21	587,636	602,902
Age 3-21	645,287	670,904

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

STATE TASK FORCE

California Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism

Under SCR 51, the California Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism was established in 2005 for a period of two years to evaluate the issues with the current programs and services for individuals with autism and provide recommendations for improvements. The commission was comprised of sixteen members appointed by the Senate Pro Tempore and Speaker of the House. Sen. Darrell Steinberg served as the chair, and Dr. Barbara Firestone served as the vice-chair. A final report was prepared in November 2007, and SCR 55 was introduced and signed into law September 2007 granting the commission an extension through November 2008.

<http://senweb03.senate.ca.gov/autism/index.html>

STATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

In September 1999, California signed into law the “Mental Health Parity Bill,” which requires health insurance coverage for the diagnosis and medically necessary treatment for serious mental illnesses, including pervasive developmental disorders or autism, for individuals of any age and serious emotional disturbances of a child under the same terms and conditions as a medical condition. Covered services include outpatient, inpatient hospital services, partial hospital services, and prescription drugs (if included in the policy). In February 2008, Senators Perata and Steinberg introduced S.B. 1563 allowing the Department of Managed Health Care, in conjunction with the Department of Insurance, to review the standards and guidelines of the Department of Developmental Services and provide recommendations to ensure that health care services and health plans provide appropriate and equitable coverage for pervasive developmental disorders or autism. S.B. 1563 passed the Senate in May 2008 with a 33 to 1 vote, and is now in the Assembly Committee on Health. The measure was vetoed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on September 27, 2008.

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EDUCATION

Superintendent's Autism Advisory Committee (SAAC)

AB 2513 was signed into law in September 2006 authorizing the California Department of Education to create the Superintendent's Autism Advisory Committee to provide recommendations for improving the educational system for students with autism. SAAC is comprised of 21 members, including parents, educators and school administrators, health care providers, and other professionals with an interest in autism. SAAC met for one year and prepared a final report in November 2007. The report identified four major challenges: lack of coherent, universally accepted and effective educational practices; lack of knowledge and training; shortage of personnel trained to provide evidence-based interventions, and inadequate funding for resources for preschool children with autism spectrum disorders. The advisory committee indicated the challenges could be overcome if the proposed recommendations can be put into place.

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/as/saac.asp>

Legislation

A.B. 2302 was introduced to authorize a local education agency to assign a teacher with a level 1 education specialist credential to teach students with mild and moderate disabilities, as an instructor to students with autism. The legislation was enrolled on June 20, 2008 and sent to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger for signature. Gov. Schwarzenegger signed A.B. 2302 into law on June 30, 2008. A.B. 1872 was introduced to create a California Autism Spectrum Disorder Clearinghouse to provide information and evidence-based information and practices on the education of students with autism. The legislation was enrolled and sent to Gov. Schwarzenegger, who vetoed the measure on September 28, 2008.

OTHER STATE RESOURCES

Department of Developmental Disabilities Autism Initiative

The California Department of Developmental Disabilities (DDS) created the Autism Initiative in 1997 to address and respond to the needs of the growing number of individuals with autism. The Autism Initiative identifies best practices, policy, information, and partnerships with public and private organizations for research. In 2001, a Director's Advisory Committee on Autism was created to advise DDS on identifying ways to develop effective procedures on evaluation and assessment.

<http://www.dds.ca.gov/Autism/Home.cfm>

Screening

S.B. 383 was introduced on February 26, 2009 to require the Department of Developmental Services to provide recommendations for the development of a screening program for autism in infants and a rescreening at two years. The legislation was sent to the Committee on Rules for assignment.

STATE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR

The California Legislature meets in Regular Session the first Monday in December in even year and adjourns on November 30th at midnight of the following even year. The 2009 legislative session convened December 12, 2008 and is expected to adjourn on September 14, 2009.

<http://www.legislature.ca.gov/>

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Sponsors of Autism Legislation:

Sen. Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) District 6	Rep. Joe Coto (D-San Jose) District 23
Sen. Tom Torlakson (D-Antioch) District 7	Rep. Mike Feuer (D-West Hollywood) District 42
Sen. Don Perata (D-Oakland) District 9	Rep. Fabian Nuñez (D-Los Angeles) District 46
Sen. Carol Liu (D-La Canada) District 21	Rep. Karen Bass (D-Los Angeles) District 47
Sen. Gilbert Cedillo (D-Los Angeles) District 22	
Sen. Dick Ackerman (R-Tustin) District 33	
Sen. Louis Correa (D-Santa Ana) District 34	