

# 2009 State Autism Profiles COLORADO

## DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2000, 505 or 0.64% of children ages 3-21 who received special education services in Colorado have autism. In 2007-2008, 2,258 or 2.72% of children with disabilities ages 3-21 who received special education services have autism.

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

	1999-2000	2007-2008
Age 3-5	53	273
Age 6-11	317	1,100
Age 12-17	118	769
Age 18-21	17	116
Age 6-21	452	1,985
Age 3-21	505	2,258

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

	1999-2000	2007-2008
Age 3-5	8,202	10,802
Age 6-11	34,364	34,301
Age 12-17	32,942	33,585
Age 18-21	3,207	4,389
Age 6-21	70,513	72,275
Age 3-21	78,715	83,077

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

## STATE TASK FORCE

### *The Colorado Autism Commission*

On April 14, 2008, Gov. Bill Ritter, Jr. signed into law S.B. 163, which establishes the Colorado Autism Commission. The commission will be comprised of 24 individuals, including self-advocates and parents of children of individuals with autism, appointed by the governor. The commission will examine the current services offered in Colorado as compared to other states and formulate a 10-year plan to address the needs of the growing number of Coloradans diagnosed with autism. The commission will submit their report to the governor and General Assembly by October 1, 2009.

[http://www.leg.state.co.us/CLICS/CLICS2008A/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/9862BBC81B23A272872573C900782290?Open&file=163\\_enr.pdf](http://www.leg.state.co.us/CLICS/CLICS2008A/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/9862BBC81B23A272872573C900782290?Open&file=163_enr.pdf)

## STATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

Colorado has a mental health parity law which requires health insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of biologically-based mental illnesses. Autism is not included in the definition of mental illnesses as defined in the statute. (*CO Rev Stat §10-16-104.3*) A separate provision for autism states that “any sickness or accident insurance policy that provides coverage for disabilities due to sickness shall also provide coverage for autism as with any accident or sickness, other than mental illness.” (*CO Rev Stat §10-16-104.5*)

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### ***Coordinated System of Payment for Early Intervention***

On May 15, 2007, SB 4 was signed into law to establish the development of a state plan for comprehensive early intervention services in accordance with Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The state plan would include an interagency cooperation agreement and the development of a coordinated system of payment for early intervention services for children from birth to 3 years with developmental disabilities or developmental delays.

### **MEDICAID**

#### ***Children with Autism Waiver***

Colorado offers a home and community-based services waiver for children ages 5 years old or younger with autism. In order to be eligible, a child must have received a diagnosis of autism by a licensed physician and be younger than six years old. Behavioral therapy services are covered at a maximum of \$25,000 per year for 3 years or until the child's sixth birthday. A maximum of 75 children can be enrolled at any one time.

<http://www.chcpf.state.co.us/HCPF/Web/ChildrenwithAutismWaiver04-08.pdf>

### **EDUCATION**

#### ***Colorado Department of Education Autism Task Force***

In 1997, the Colorado Department of Education created the Colorado Autism Task Force to review and address the educational needs of students with autism. The task force was comprised of parents, educators, and other professionals with an interest in autism. The task force provided recommendations and best practices to the Colorado Department of Education for the education of students with autism. Brochures, fact sheets, and manuals were developed as resources for parents and educators of students with autism.

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Autism.asp>

#### ***Scholarship for Children with Autism Pilot***

S.B. 130 was introduced on January 27, 2009 to create a pilot scholarship program for children with autism spectrum disorders. The scholarship would allow parents of a child with autism who is enrolled in a public school to send their child to apply for a scholarship to send their child to an eligible private school. The amount of the scholarship would be approximately the amount of services the child would have received in public school or the cost of tuition at the private school, whichever is less. The bill was assigned to the Senate Education Committee and referred amended to Appropriations on February 12, 2009.

### **STATE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR**

The Colorado General Assembly meets annually on the second Wednesday of January for no more than 120 days. The 2009 Regular Session convened on January 7 and is expected to adjourn on May 6.

<http://www.leg.state.co.us/>

#### ***Sponsors of Autism Legislation:***

Sen. Brandon C. Shaffer (D-Longmont) District 17

Rep. Dianne Primavera (D-Broomfield) District 33

Sen. Nancy Spence (R-Arapahoe) District 27