

2009 State Autism Profiles MISSISSIPPI

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2000, 419 or 0.67% of children ages 3-21 who received special education services in Mississippi have autism. In 2007-2008, 1,212 or 1.84% of children with disabilities ages 3-21 who received special education services have autism.

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

	1999-2000	2007-2008
Age 3-5	34	131
Age 6-11	220	625
Age 12-17	138	389
Age 18-21	27	67
Age 6-21	385	1,081
Age 3-21	419	1,212

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

	1999-2000	2007-2008
Age 3-5	6,944	8,422
Age 6-11	28,423	27,796
Age 12-17	24,217	26,247
Age 18-21	2,697	3,252
Age 6-21	55,337	57,295
Age 3-21	62,281	65,717

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

STATE TASK FORCE

Caring for Mississippi Individuals with Autism Task Force

H.B. 1267 was signed into law by Gov. Haley Barbour on March 26, 2007, creating a state taskforce to evaluate the needs of individuals with autism, in particular the areas of medical, education and early intervention, and to propose recommendations for improving services for autism in the state. The task force was comprised of 15 members who represented state agencies, parents, and other professionals with an interest in autism. Susan Buttross, M.D. served as the chair, and Nicole Boyd, J.D. served as the vice-chair. The task force found that care and services for people with autism were inadequate. To address this problem, the task force proposed recommendations, such as a waiver that would provide services to individuals with autism. The task force also recommended that all teachers and special education professionals receive better training about autism spectrum disorders and that community colleges offer classes on the autism spectrum disorders so that graduates are better prepared to work with individuals with autism. A final report was submitted to the governor and legislature on December 1, 2007. S.B. 2058 was introduced to reinstate the task force to continue its work through July 1, 2009. The bill was introduced on January 6, 2009 and referred to the Public Health and Welfare Committee. No further action has been taken at this time.

<http://www.dmh.state.ms.us/documents/ReportFinal3.pdf>

STATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

Legislation (H.B. 720, H.B. 1513, S.B. 2160, S.B. 2753, and S.B. 2585) was introduced in January 2009 requiring health insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders for individuals under the age of 21. Treatment includes habilitative or rehabilitative care, including applied behavioral analysis; pharmacy care; psychiatric care; psychological care, and therapeutic care. Coverage under H.B. 720, S.B. 2753 and S.B. 2855 would be subject to a maximum benefit of \$50,000 per year; under S.B. 2160, coverage for ABA would be subject to a maximum benefit of \$50,000 per year. H.B. 1513 provides for coverage to individuals under 12 years old with no maximum benefits. No further

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action was taken. H.B. 720 referred to the House Insurance and Appropriations Committees on January 15; H.B. 1513 was referred to the House Insurance Committee. No further action has been taken. S.B. 2160, S.B. 2753, S.B. 2885 were referred to the Senate Insurance Committee; no further action has been taken.

EDUCATION

Mississippi defines autism as a developmental disability that affects communications and social interactions, usually manifested before the age of 3, which adversely affects a child's educational performance. To be eligible to receive special education services, a student must undergo a comprehensive assessment. The assessment includes physical and emotion tests, as well as achievement tests to see if the student is performing below their age norms. Teachers may also be asked to provide a narrative or developmental history of the student.

http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/Special_education/pdfs/New_Att_A.pdf

Educational Task Force on Failing Schools

S.B. 2288 was introduced on January 6, 2009 to direct the educational task force on failing schools to study resources and programs provided to students with autism spectrum disorders, implementing autism spectrum disorder classrooms in public schools, and providing transition services to teenagers and adults with autism spectrum disorders. The bill passed the House as amended and returned for concurrence on March 9. Similar legislation was filed under S.B. 2483. The legislation was referred to the Senate Education and Appropriations Committees; no further action has been taken.

OTHER STATE GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

Mississippi Department of Mental Health, Division of Autism Spectrum Disorders

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health created a new division focused on services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders.

<http://www.dmh.state.ms.us/autism.htm>

Program for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders

S.B. 2478 was introduced to authorize the Department of Rehabilitation Services to develop a program for adults with autism spectrum disorders. The program would include worker training, occupational training, speech therapy, applied behavioral analysis, sensory integration, and other learning and behavioral integration for adults transitioning into the workforce. The legislation was referred to the Public Health and Welfare and Appropriations Committees; no further action has been taken.

STATE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR

The Mississippi State Legislature meets annually on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January. The 2009 Legislative Session convened on January 6 and is expected to adjourn April 5.

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/>

Sponsors of Autism Legislation:

Sen. Bill Stone (D-Ashland) District 2
Sen. Gray Tollison (D-Oxford) District 9
Sen. David Jordan (D-Greenwood) District 24

Rep. Noal Akins (R-Oxford) District 12
Rep. Blaine Eaton (D-Taylorsville) District 79