

2008 State Autism Profiles ALABAMA

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2000, 849 or 0.85% of children ages 3-21 who received special education services in Alabama have autism. In 2006-2007, 2,373 or 2.67% of children with disabilities ages 3-21 who received special education services have autism.

Table 1-1: IDEA Part B - Children with Autism in Alabama for 1999-2000 and 2006-2007
(Child Count by Age Group)

	1999-2000	2006-2007
Age 3-5	84	195
Age 6-11	479	1,216
Age 12-17	248	836
Age 18-21	38	126
Age 6-21	765	2,178
Age 3-21	849	2,373

Source: Reported by the State of Alabama 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 Alabama for 1999-2000 and 2006-2007
(Child Count by Age Group)

	1999-2000	2006-2007
Age 3-5	7,554	8,026
Age 6-11	43,047	35,160
Age 12-17	44,068	40,654
Age 18-21	5,159	5,173
Age 6-21	92,274	80,987
Age 3-21	99,828	89,013

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

STATE TASK FORCE

Alabama Autism Task Force

In March 2007, Governor Bob R. Riley, Jr. signed HJR 23 to create a statewide task force in autism. The Alabama Autism Task Force met for one year to examine the diagnosis and treatment of individuals with autism and report to the legislature of findings and recommendations. The task force was composed of 25 members, including legislators and representatives from state agencies, healthcare providers, educators, and professionals with an interest in autism. HJR 12 was signed by Gov. Riley on April 8, 2008 extending the reporting date for the task force to the third day of the 2009 Legislative Session. Rep. Cam Ward (R-Alabaster) served as the chair. H.B. 150/S.B. 348 was introduced to establish an Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Retardation to coordinate programs and services for individuals with autism. The legislation passed the House as HJR 3 in the First Special Session and was sent to Governor Riley for signature on May 29, 2008.

<http://www.camward.com/AutismTaskForce.htm>

STATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

Alabama currently does not offer health insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of individuals with autism. H.B. 677 was signed into law in 2000 providing equitable health insurance coverage for mental illnesses as defined by the International Classification of Diseases, including autism spectrum disorders. Under the law, group health benefits plans must provide coverage for the treatment and diagnosis of mental illnesses as with medical illnesses (*Alabama Code §27-54-1*).

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EDUCATION

H.B. 227 was introduced January 15, 2008 to create a scholarship program for students with autism. Under the legislation, students with autism would be provided the option to attend a school other than one in the resident school district. The Alabama Department of Education will review the individualized education program to determine the amount of the scholarship. The maximum amount of the scholarship is the equivalent amount that for educational services the student would have received by attending a school in the resident school district. The legislation was referred to the House Education and Appropriations Committee on February 5, 2008.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Alabama Autism Conference

The Alabama Autism Conference provides professionals with an interest in autism information on the latest in autism research. The conference is focused on professionals who provide services to individuals with autism and researchers. The 7th Annual Alabama Autism Conference was held on February 28-29, 2008 at the University of Alabama – Tuscaloosa.

<http://autism.ua.edu/index.html>

STATE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR

The Alabama Legislature meets in Regular Session on the second Tuesday in January for sixty days or on a day prescribed by law. The 2008 Regular Session convened on February 5, 2008 and adjourned May 19, 2008.

<http://www.legislature.state.al.us/index.html>

Sponsors of Autism Legislation:

Sen. Quinton T. Ross, Jr. (D-Montgomery) District 26
Sen. Myron Penn (D-Clayton) District 28

Rep. Cam Ward (R-Alabaster) District 49
Rep. Priscilla Dunn (D-Bessemer) District 56
Rep. Randy Davis (R-Daphne) District 96