

2008 State Autism Profiles MONTANA

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2000, 188 or 0.97% of children ages 3-21 who received special education services in Montana have autism. In 2006-2007, 372 or 2.00% of children with disabilities ages 3-21 who received special education services have autism.

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

	1999-2000	2006-2007
Age 3-5	23	58
Age 6-11	113	X
Age 12-17	50	X
Age 18-21	2	X
Age 6-21	165	314
Age 3-21	188	372

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

	1999-2000	2006-2007
Age 3-5	1,635	1,941
Age 6-11	8,482	7,511
Age 12-17	8,324	8,282
Age 18-21	872	823
Age 6-21	17,678	16,616
Age 3-21	19,313	18,557

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

STATE TASK FORCE

Montana Autism Task Force

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services convened an informal Autism Task Force in August 2007 to determine whether the state should move forward with a Medicaid waiver for autism. Additionally, the task force is considering how the waiver should be focused and developing a strategy to provide services for adults with autism. The task force is comprised of a state legislator, providers, regional state developmental disability staff, and families of an individual with autism. The task force is expected to continue through December 2008 and present a report of its findings to the Joint Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee in 2009. (Refer to section on Medicaid.)

STATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

Montana does not have a specific mandate for autism insurance coverage at this time. Montana has a mental health parity law, which includes coverage for severe mental illnesses. Effective July 1, 2009, policy or certificate of health insurance or disability insurance must provide a level of benefits necessary for the care and treatment of severe mental illness, including autism. Benefits include inpatient hospital services, outpatient services, rehabilitative services, medication, and services by a licensed physician, licensed advanced practice registered nurse with a specialty in mental health, licensed social worker, licensed psychologist, or licensed professional counselor whose services are part of a treatment plan prescribed by a licensed physician. (MCA 33-22-706 (Temporary))

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MEDICAID

Autism Waiver

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) is in process of working with the Centers of Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) to develop a waiver for children with autism. The waiver covers children with autism between the ages of 2 and 5 years for a maximum of three years and provides 20-25 hours per week of early intensive rehabilitation in the home by a qualified provider. The waiver is expected to provide \$40,000 in services per year per recipient (maximum of \$120,000) for 40 children with autism, selected at random. In July 2008, DPHHS announced that it will be offering free screenings for autism spectrum disorders. The effort will create a database not only to reveal the extent of autism spectrum disorders in the state, but also to identify children under five years old with autism who may be eligible for services under the new waiver.

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/newsevents/newsreleases2008/june/autismnumbers.shtml>

1915(c) HCBS Waiver: MT-0208.90.R2 Waiver

Montana offers a Medicaid waiver for individuals with a developmental disability or mental retardation. This waiver is administered by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Disability Services Division, Developmental Disabilities Program. Children up to age five years old with a diagnosis of autism are covered under the waiver for a maximum of three years. Services are provided at \$40,000 per year per service recipient to a maximum of \$120,000. Covered services include case management/family supports coordination (for children services only), homemaker, habilitation – residential and day habilitation (includes all congregate work and senior day services, prevocational services), supported employment, respite, adult companion services, adult foster support, community transition services, residential training support, assisted living, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, psychological services, personal care, environmental modifications/adaptive equipment, transportation, private duty nursing, respiratory therapy, dietician, and meals. Specific details on the services are provided in the waiver application.

EDUCATION

As part of the comprehensive educational evaluation and re-evaluation process requirements under the Administrative Rules of Montana, an additional team member is required in the initial evaluation of a student with a specified disability, including autism. For students with autism, a school psychologist and speech-language pathologist is required for the initial evaluation. (*ARM 10.16.3321*) In order to be identified as having autism, the student must meet certain criteria, including documentation that supports the existence of a developmental disability prior to the age of three years and difficulties with verbal and non-verbal communications and social interaction. Assessments should include documentation of the significant delays in verbal and non-verbal communications and social interaction, and other characteristics associated with autism. A student may be identified as having autism after the age of three years if assessments can document significant delays in verbal and non-verbal communications and social interaction, and other characteristics associated with autism. However, a student cannot be identified as having autism “if the student’s educational performance is adversely affected primarily by an emotional disturbance.” (*ARM 10.16.3011*)

STATE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR

The Montana Legislature meets in Regular Session every odd-numbered year for no more than 90 days. The 61st Regular Session will convene on January 5, 2009.

<http://leg.mt.gov/css/default.asp>

Sponsors of Autism Legislation:

Rep. Edith Clark (R-Sweetgrass) District 28
Rep. George Groesbeck (D-Butte) District 74