

2012 State Autism Profiles GEORGIA

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2000, 1,032 or 1.09% of children ages 3-21 who received special education services in Georgia have autism. In 2010-2011, 11,306 or 6.37% of children with disabilities ages 3-21 who received special education services have autism.

Table 1-1: IDEA Part B - Children with Autism in Georgia for 1999-2000 and 2010-2011
(Child Count by Age Group)

	1999-2000	2010-2011
Age 3-5	272	758
Age 6-11	1,386	5,426
Age 12-17	456	4,357
Age 18-21	74	765
Age 6-21	1,916	10,548
Age 3-21	2,188	11,306

Source: Reported by the State of Georgia 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 Georgia for 1999-2000 and 2010-2011
(Child Count by Age Group)

	1999-2000	2010-2011
Age 3-5	16,560	15,911
Age 6-11	82,867	74,705
Age 12-17	66,675	77,447
Age 18-21	5,190	9,481
Age 6-21	154,732	161,633
Age 3-21	171,292	177,544

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

STATE TASK FORCE

The State of Georgia does not have an active statewide task force on autism at this time. However, on April 1, 2009, S.R. 672 was adopted, creating the Senate Study Committee on Autism for the purpose of further exploring issues surrounding the availability and affordability of health care insurance covering autism and access to health care services. The committee disbanded December 31, 2009.

http://www.legis.state.ga.us/legis/2009_10/pdf/sr672.pdf

STATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

H.B. 565 was signed into law in 2001, which states that group health insurance plans that provide benefits for neurological disorders must provide the same benefits to covered individuals based on the diagnosis of autism. Health benefits, including copayments, exclusions, cost-sharing, limitations as to type and scope of treatment, conditions, schedule of benefits, for individuals with autism are to be provided in accordance with neurological conditions. (*O.C.G.A §33-24-59.10*)

On January 17, 2009, both H.B. 426 and S.B. 161 were introduced to require full coverage of medical, therapeutic, rehabilitative, and pharmacy care for the treatment of autism spectrum disorders. S.B.161 or “Ava’s Law” was voted out of the Senate and House Subcommittees on March 4, 2009. On March 10, 2009 Ava’s Law was voted out of the Committee and moved onto the floor of the House for a vote where it was not passed. Instead, unanimously the House voted to approve a committee appointed to study the issue of autism spectrum disorder insurance reform. On April 13, 2010, the Committee on Insurance favorably reported on the bill; however, no further legislative action was taken. Ava’s Law would have provided that an individual cannot be denied or refused health insurance coverage or treatment because of a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. Under the legislation, autism spectrum disorders are redefined as neurobiological, medical disorders, as opposed to mental health disorders. Coverage for Applied

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Behavioral Analysis under this bill was subject to an inflation adjusted maximum benefit of \$36,000 annually and a maximum lifetime benefit of \$200,000, but the bill did not restrict the number of visits or the duration of each visit. In order to receive coverage under the legislation, a child must be diagnosed with autism prior to the age of 8 and coverage would be provided only until age 16. Coverage of treatments will be provided when prescribed, provided, or ordered for an individual diagnosed with autism by a licensed physician or a licensed psychologist who determines the care to be medically necessary.

EDUCATION

Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program

The Georgia Special Needs Scholarship program was established under S.B. 10, which was signed into law by Gov. Sonny Perdue in May 2007. The scholarship program is administered by the Georgia Department of Education, and expands the options for educational settings for students with a disability. Under the scholarship program, parents of an eligible student may opt to send their child to an approved private school or to another public school within or outside of the residential school district if the school accepts the student. Autism is included as a qualifying disability. The maximum amount awarded is the amount of funding the school would have received from the state if the student had attended a school within the residential school district.

<http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/External-Affairs-and-Policy/Policy/Pages/Special-Needs-Scholarship-Program.aspx>

STATE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR

The Georgia General Assembly meets in Regular Session on the second Monday in January each year for no more than 40 days. The 2012 Regular Session convened on January 9, 2012 and adjourned on March 29, 2012. The 2013 session is expected to convene on January 14, 2013 and is expected to adjourn in March 2013.

<http://www.legis.state.ga.us/>

Sponsors of Autism Legislation:

Sen. Bill Cowsert (R-Athens) District 46
Sen. Johnny Grant (R-Milledgeville) District 25
Sen. Tommie Williams (R-Lyons) District 19

Rep. Katie Dempsey (R-Rome) District 13
Rep. Ben Harbin (R-Evans) District 118