

2012 State Autism Profiles WASHINGTON

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2000, 1,684 or 1.42% of children ages 3-21 who received special education services in Washington have autism. In 2010-2011, 8,598 or 6.72% of children with disabilities ages 3-21 who received special education services have autism.

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

	1999-2000	2010-2011
Age 3-5	64	803
Age 6-11	1,094	3,895
Age 12-17	453	3,259
Age 18-21	73	641
Age 6-21	1,620	7,795
Age 3-21	1,684	8,598

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

	1999-2000	2010-2011
Age 3-5	11,760	14,275
Age 6-11	54,426	56,548
Age 12-17	47,725	50,405
Age 18-21	4,940	6,750
Age 6-21	107,091	113,703
Age 3-21	118,851	127,978

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

STATE TASK FORCE

The Caring for Washington Individuals with Autism Task Force

In 2005, S.B. 5311 was signed into law and established “The Caring for Washington Individuals with Autism Task Force.” An initial report was submitted in 2006 proposing 31 changes to autism services in Washington. The task force was commissioned to submit a second report and did so the following year. In the December 2007 report focused on six major priorities for improving services provided to individuals with autism. In 2007, the task force received funding to continue its work through June 30, 2008 so that the task force could create the Washington State Autism Guidebook, prioritize recommendations from the 2006 report, develop implementation plans and cost estimates for the highest priority recommendations, and monitor federal legislation and funding opportunities. Other priorities included establishing regional autism centers throughout the state; developing a proposal to ensure all individuals with autism receive comprehensive health care and coverage; recommending all children in Washington be screened for autism before the age of 3; outlining services and strategies to help families of individuals with ASDs stay together; and requiring each Education Service District to employ at least one trained autism technical assistance specialist. The Task Force held their final meeting on June 23, 2008.

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/Autism/AutismTaskForce.aspx>

STATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

Washington does not have a specific health insurance mandate for autism spectrum disorders at this time. However, during the 2011 session, S.B. 5059, known as “Shayan’s Law”, was introduced to require health insurance coverage for the screening, diagnosis, and treatment of autism spectrum disorders. Similar bills had been offered since at least 2009, though none had passed. The bill has no cap on age or number of visits and has no annual dollar limits. Coverage would not be subject to lifetime maximums, deductibles, copayments, coinsurance, or other terms and conditions that are less favorable than those that apply to physical illness generally under the health plan. Coverage of treatments will be provided when

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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. Under this bill, health insurance companies would be required to provide coverage of behavioral health treatments, pharmacy, psychiatric, psychological, therapeutic and any care for individuals with autism spectrum disorders that is demonstrated, based upon practices or evidence-based research, to be medically necessary. S.B. 5059 was referred to the Committee on Health and Long Term Care. Shayan's Law received a public hearing. No further action has been taken.

Limited coverage may be available under the mental health parity law, which states that effective January 1, 2008, it is illegal to discriminate against individuals with autism or mental illnesses. Health insurance coverage and benefits for mental health conditions are required at the same level as with medical conditions. (RCW §48.41.200)

EDUCATION

The Department of Health applied for and was awarded one of only nine competitive state grants under the National Combating Autism Act of 2006 to fight autism through research, surveillance, awareness, and early identification. *Autism Awareness: Partnership for Change* is a three-year, \$900,000 grant focused on bringing awareness to the importance of early identification and treatment; educating service providers and other professionals on diagnosis and treatment; and improving service systems in Washington State for individuals with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental delays. To guide the efforts of the Autism Awareness Grant, the Combating Autism Advisory Council was formed to carry out the state's strategic plan to explore and improve needed changes and connect autism-related information, services, and research to the public.

<http://here.doh.wa.gov/projects/autism-awareness-partnership-for-change/>

EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Autism Outreach Project

The Autism Outreach Project (AOP) is a statewide system that helps school districts, parents, and agencies identify, place, and serve students with autism spectrum disorders. The services provided by the AOP are designed to enrich the lives of individuals with autism and include information, referrals, special events, training, needs assessment, and technical training.

<http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/stateneeds/autism.aspx>

OTHER STATE RESOURCES

Foster Parent Training

S.B. 6071 was introduced on February 20, 2009 to require the Oregon Department of Social and Health Services to incorporate training on the needs of children with autism in the foster parent training curriculum by January 1, 2010. The legislation was referred to the Senate Committee on Human Services and Corrections.

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ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCIES AND COURTS

In June 2012, a federal court ruled that the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) violated the Mental Health Parity Act by refusing to cover Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), occupational, speech, physical, and other therapies after age six. The class action case, *Z.D. v. Group Health Cooperative*, was heard by U.S. District Court Judge Robert Lasnik. Judge Lasnik issued an immediate injunction. In July 2012, the HCA reached a settlement with state employees regarding ABA coverage under Washington's Uniform Medical Plan.

[Http://www.washingtonautismadvocacy.org/updates/wp-content/uploads/77-Order-signed-Granting-Pls.-Mot.-for-Summ.-J..pdf](http://www.washingtonautismadvocacy.org/updates/wp-content/uploads/77-Order-signed-Granting-Pls.-Mot.-for-Summ.-J..pdf)

STATE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR

The Washington State Legislature meets annually beginning the second Monday in January for 105 days in odd-numbered years and for 60 days in even-numbered years. The 2012 legislative session convened on January 9, 2012 and adjourned on March 8, 2012. The 2013 Session will convene on January 14, 2013 and anticipates adjournment in April 2013.

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/pages/home.aspx>

Sponsors of Autism Legislation:

Sen. Jerome Delvin (R-Richland) District 8
Sen. Steve Hobbs (D-Everett) District 44
Sen. Adam Kline (D-Seattle) District 37
Sen. Rosemary McAuliffe (D-Bothell) District 1
Sen. Ed Murray (D-Seattle) District 43
Sen. Debbie Regala (D-Tacoma) District 27
Sen. Pam Roach (R-Auburn) District 31
Sen. Rodney Tom (D-Bellevue) District 48

Rep. Jeannie Darneille (D-Tacoma) District 27
Rep. Mary Lou Dickerson (D-Seattle) District 36
Rep. Christopher Hurst (D-Summer) District 31
Rep. Ruth Kagi (D-Shoreline) District 32
Rep. Timm Ormsby (D-Spokane) District 3
Rep. Maureen Walsh (R-Walla Walla) District 16