

2013 State Autism Profiles NORTH CAROLINA

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2000, 2,635 or 1.52% of children ages 3-21 who received special education services in North Carolina have autism. In 2011-2012, 13,274 or 7.07% of children with disabilities ages 3-21 who received special education services have autism.

Table 1-1: IDEA Part B - Children with Autism in North Carolina for 1999-2000 and 2011-2012
(Child Count by Age Group)

	1999-2000	2011-2012
Age 3-5	261	1,500
Age 6-11	1,507	6,208
Age 12-17	718	4,751
Age 18-21	149	815
Age 6-21	2,374	11,774
Age 3-21	2,635	13,274

Source: Reported by the State of North Carolina 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 North Carolina for 1999-2000 and 2011-2012
(Child Count by Age Group)

	1999-2000	2011-2012
Age 3-5	17,361	18,787
Age 6-11	84,191	79,969
Age 12-17	66,212	78,427
Age 18-21	5,303	10,584
Age 6-21	155,706	168,980
Age 3-21	173,067	187,767

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

STATE TASK FORCE

Joint Committee on Autism Spectrum Disorder, Law Enforcement, Public Safety, and First Responders

The North Carolina General Assembly established the Joint Committee on Autism Spectrum Disorder, Law Enforcement, Public Safety, and First Responders to evaluate the training and education for law enforcement and emergency personnel in how to interact with individuals with autism. The committee prepared a final report in 2006. The recommendations included: a proposal for additional staff to conduct a statewide training for law enforcement; identification cards to identify an individual as having autism; evaluating the use of Tasers on individuals with disabilities; and a review of ways to evacuate and assist individuals with disabilities. Sen. William Purcell and Rep. Edd Nye served as co-chairs to the committee, which also included members of the public and professionals with an interest in autism. <http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p249901coll22/id/10151/rec/15>

S.B. 202, passed on August 7, 2009, created a Joint Study Committee on Autism Spectrum Disorder and Public Safety. This committee consists of members and co-chairs appointed by the President Pro Tempore on the Senate and Speaker of the House. The committee's purpose is to study ways in which to increase availability of autism-specific education and training to public safety personnel, first responders, district attorneys, and magistrates. The Committee was to submit an interim report to the members of both the Senate and House on or before May 1, 2010.

STATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

North Carolina does not have a health insurance mandate for autism. However, during the 2013 legislative session, H.B. 498 was introduced requiring health care plans to provide for diagnosis and

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treatment of autism spectrum disorder when medically necessary and prescribed by a licensed physician or psychologist in accordance with a treatment plan. The new bill would cover speech, occupational and physical therapy; behavioral health treatment, such as Applied Behavior Analysis. H.B. 498 placed a \$75,000 a year maximum reimbursement on Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA). Benefits would be covered through age 23; children would have to be diagnosed by age 8 to qualify. In addition, the bill would benefit military families stationed in North Carolina by removing restrictive laws that prevent TRICARE providers from operating in the state. TRICARE is the Department of Defense health insurance program. The bill was passed by the House and sent to the Senate where it was referred to the Senate Committee on Insurance. No further action was taken in the Senate, although it has been marked by leadership for discussion in the 2014 short session.

Limited coverage for autism may be available under the mental health parity legislation (H.B. 973) that was signed into law by Governor Easley on July 27, 2007. Group health insurance plans must provide coverage for mental illnesses as with physical illnesses. Mental illnesses are defined by the *Diagnostic Statistics Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-IV*, and autism is included. However, group health insurance plans may establish review criteria to determine the medical necessity of the mental illness. Also, group health insurance plans may set durational limits for the treatment of mental illnesses that are different from limits set for physical illnesses. At a minimum, the group health insurance plan must cover at least thirty office visits per year or a total of 30 combined inpatient/outpatient visits per year.

MEDICAID

North Carolina Home and Community-Based Services Waiver: NC Comprehensive Waiver

This waiver, implemented on November 1, 2008, provides adult day health services, day supports, personal care, residential supports, respite, supported employment, augmentative communication devices, behavior consultant services, crisis respite, crisis services, home and community supports, home modifications, home supports, individual caregiver training and education, long term vocational supports, PERS, specialized consultative services, specialized equipment and supplies, transportation, and vehicle adaptations for individuals of all ages with autism, developmental disabilities, and mental retardation. This waiver expires on September 30, 2017.

North Carolina Home and Community-Based Services Waiver: NC Supports Waiver

This waiver, implemented on November 1, 2008, provides adult day health services, day supports, home and community supports, personal care, respite, supported employment, augmentative communication devices, behavior consultation services, crisis respite, crisis services, home modifications, individual and caregiver training, individual goods and services (SD only), long term vocational supports, PERS, specialized consultative services, specialized equipment and supplies, transportation, and vehicle adaptation for individuals of all ages with autism, developmental disabilities, and mental retardation.

<http://www.medicaid.gov/Medicaid-CHIP-Program-Information/By-Topics/Waivers/Waivers.html>

EDUCATION

In 2006, H.B. 1908 was signed into law, rewriting the education laws for students with disabilities. The new law re-titles Article 9 of the state constitution as “Education of Children with Disabilities.” The law guarantees all children ages three to 21 with disabilities who reside in the state to a free public education. Revisions to the definition of disabilities, on which autism is listed, also include developmental delay for children three to seven years old. In 2007, the North Carolina Department of Education released new guidelines for students with disabilities. Under the guidelines, autism is defined as a developmental disability that “significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, and adversely impacts the student’s educational performance.” (NC 1500-2.4)

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Autism Spectrum Disorders Program

The North Carolina Department of Education provides instructional support to for educators of students with autism. The Autism Spectrum Disorders Program serves as a local resource for local education agencies, charter schools and school administrators interested in identifying training for staff on instructional methods for students with autism and establishing local experts.

<http://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/disability-resources/autism-spectrum-disorders>

OTHER STATE RESOURCES

Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication-handicapped Children (TEACCH)

TEACCH is administered by the Department of Psychiatry at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. Programs and services throughout the state are provided by the ten regional centers. Additionally, TEACCH conducts research and offers publications, assessments, and training. The program is recognized nationally and internationally for its approach to serve individuals with autism.

<http://www.teacch.com/>

Autism Alert

On July 11, 2008, Gov. Michael Easley signed into law H.B. 2523 (SL2008-83), which rewrites *G.S. 143B-499.8(b)* to authorize a “silver alert” to be issued at any age. H.B. 2523 also authorizes a silver alert to be issued for individuals with autism who are reported missing.

STATE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR

The North Carolina General Assembly meets in Regular Session every two years. The 2011-2012 Biennium convened on January 26, 2011. The 2013-2014 Biennium convened on January 30, 2013 and adjourned July 26, 2013. It is scheduled to reconvene on May 14, 2014.

<http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/>

Sponsors of Autism Legislation

Rep. Phil Shepard (R-Onslow) District 15

Rep. Tom Murry (R-Wake) District 41

Rep. Rick Glazier (D-Cumberland) District 44

Rep. Tricia Cotham (D- Mecklenburg) District 100

Rep. Chuck McGrady (R-Henderson) District 117