

2016 State Autism Profiles CONNECTICUT

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2000, 1,377 or 1.86% of children ages 3-21 who received special education services in Connecticut have autism. In 2014-2015, 8,278 or 11.3% of children with disabilities ages 3-21 who received special education services have autism.

Table 1-1: IDEA Part B - Children with Autism in Connecticut for 2000-2001 and 2014-2015
(Child Count by Age Group)

	2000-2001	2014-2015
Age 3-5	152	882
Age 6-21	1,225	7,396
Age 3-21	1,377	8,278

Source: Reported by the State of Connecticut 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 Connecticut for 2000-2001 and 2014-2015
(Child Count by Age Group)

	2000-2001	2014-2015
Age 3-5	7,172	8,431
Age 6-11	29,734	27,767
Age 12-17	33,583	33,115
Age 18-21	3,397	3,980
Age 6-21	66,714	64,862
Age 3-21	73,886	73,293

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

STATE TASK FORCE

Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council

In 2013, the legislature passed S.B. 874 establishing the Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council to advise the Commissioner of Developmental Services on all matters related to autism including services, policies, programs, and implementing recommendations from the autism feasibility study. The Council will terminate June 30, 2018. (*Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-215d*)

<http://www.ct.gov/dds/cwp/view.asp?a=2730&q=521856>

Connecticut Task Force on the Issues for the Education of Children with Autism

In 1996, the Connecticut Department of Education convened a task force on the educational needs of children with autism. Based upon its findings, the task force prepared a “Report of the Connecticut Task Force on the Issues for the Education of Children with Autism,” which was revised in 1998. In 2005, the report was updated and re-titled to “Guidelines for the Identification and Education of Children and Youth with Autism.” Known as the guidelines, the 2011 revision serves as a best practices guide to educating children with autism.

http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/Guidelines_Autism.pdf

STATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

On June 5, 2008, Governor M. Jodi Rell signed into law H.B. 5696, a health insurance mandate for the treatment of autism spectrum disorders. Under the law, effective January 1, 2009, individual and group health insurance policies that provide coverage for basic hospital expenses, basic and major medical-surgical expenses, and hospital or medical coverage shall also provide coverage for the treatment of autism spectrum disorders. Treatment covered includes physical, occupational, and speech. Policies may not impose any limits on the number of visits to an autism services provider. (*Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 38a-488b, 38a-514b*)

2016 State Autism Profiles CONNECTICUT

In 2009, S.B. 301 expanded the insurance mandate to cover both treatment and diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders. The treatment must be medically necessary ordered by a physician, psychologist or clinical social worker in accordance with a treatment plan. In addition to physical, occupational, and speech therapies, insurers must cover behavioral therapy and drugs prescribed specifically for the treatment of autism. Coverage for behavioral therapy may be limited yearly depending on the age of the patient. Coverage is required for behavioral therapy at a maximum yearly benefit of \$50,000 for children under the age of 9, \$35,000 for children ages 9 to 12, and \$25,000 for children ages 13 to 14.

As of July 2014, Connecticut Insurance Department's Consumer Affairs Division clarified the insurance mandate in Connecticut. Because the Affordable Care Act (ACA) prohibits annual dollar amounts on essential health benefits, including autism coverage, insurance companies in Connecticut will be required to file with the Department of Health and Human Services an annual certificate and demonstration making non-dollar substitutions that are actuarially equivalent to the dollar amounts in the Connecticut autism insurance law.

On June 30, 2015, the Governor signed into law mental health parity legislation. S.B. 1085 (*Public Law number 15-226*) provides that health insurance policies must cover for mental and nervous conditions. A policy must cover the diagnosis and treatment of mental or nervous conditions on the same basis as medical, surgical, or other physical conditions (i. e., parity).

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2015/ACT/PA/2015PA-00226-R00SB-01085-PA.htm>

ESSENTIAL HEALTH BENEFITS

Under the Affordable Care Act, Connecticut will continue to offer autism services including applied behavior analysis (ABA) on its state-run exchange. There is some confusion as to where ABA is categorized as an Essential Health Benefit under ACA. It is in a category of "other" in the benchmark plan, under habilitative services according to a recent Connecticut Insurance Department Bulletin, but statutes list it under "behavioral therapy."
(Connecticare, Inc.; HMO)

MEDICAID

Autism Services under EPSDT

Based on Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) requirements in Medicaid, effective January 1, 2015, Connecticut expanded its coverage of ASD evaluation and treatment services under Medicaid for individuals up to the age of 21 for whom ASD services are medically necessary. New regulations governing payment for ASD services under Medicaid are being developed will be implemented in draft form.

<http://ct.gov/dds/cwp/view.asp?a=2730&q=442840>

Connecticut Home and Community Supports Waiver for Persons with Autism

In December 31, 2012, the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services approved a Medicaid 1915(c) waiver for individuals with autism spectrum disorders who do not also have a diagnosis of intellectual disability. The waiver provides services for children age three and above and for adults who require residential habilitation, personal supports, respite, assistive technology, clinical behavioral supports, supported employment, job coaching, community transition services, life skills coaching, non-medical transportation, community transition services or short term crisis stabilization to remain in their own home, family home or other community home services. The waiver expires December 31, 2017.

2016 State Autism Profiles CONNECTICUT

Connecticut Early Childhood Autism Waiver

On January 29, 2014, CMS approved Connecticut's Early Childhood Autism Waiver, designed to serve young children aged three and four who are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and who have significant impairments in adaptive behaviors as well as severe maladaptive behaviors. Services are designed to improve skills in receptive and expressive communication, social interaction and activities of daily living, while reducing the inappropriate or problematic behaviors often associated with autism, using methodologies based on Applied Behavior Analysis. This waiver will initially serve 30 children at a cost cap of \$30,000 per child per year. Services will include 10 hours of intensive behavioral services and two hours of clinical supervision per week. To be eligible for the waiver children must be between the ages of three and 4.6 years of age and be Medicaid eligible. The waiver will expire January 31, 2019.

http://www.ct.gov/dds/lib/dds/autism/ecaw_application_5_6_14.pdf

<http://www.ct.gov/dds/cwp/view.asp?a=2042&q=332294>

http://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid-chip-program-information/by-topics/waivers/waivers_faceted.html

EDUCATION

H.B. 5590 was signed into law by Gov. M. Jodi Rell on June 5, 2008 to develop recommendations for a new state plan for instructors of students with autism and other developmental disabilities. Aspects that were covered included characteristics of students with autism, curriculum, assistive technology, educational practices. Recommendations were presented to the general assembly by March 2, 2009. (*Special Act No. 08-5*)

http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/Updates/Minutes_3209.pdf

H.B. 5425, An Act Concerning Special Education, was enacted on June 8, 2010 providing that a local or regional board of education is responsible for providing applied behavior analysis services to any child with autism if the individualized education plan requires these services. The law went into effect July 1, 2010.

OTHER STATE RESOURCES

Legislation

Additional legislation introduced during the 2015 session addressed the following issue related to individuals with autism: H.B. 6714 and H.B. 5821 (physical activity programs to promote health and wellbeing on individuals with ASD); H.B. 6681 (need for residential and community services for young adults with developmental disabilities); H.B. 5820 (increase numbers of individuals with ASD who receive long-term support by interagency collaboration); H.B. 5377 (internship for adults with autism and tax credit for hiring businesses); H.B. 6490 (pilot program to provide coordinated services for certain individuals with ASD who have been difficult to serve or place need high level of services, and are on the department's emergency list). None of the bills passed out of committee.

Division of Autism Spectrum Disorders

On May 9, 2011 the governor signed H.B. 6278 into law creating a Division of Autism Spectrum Disorders within the Department of Developmental Services. H.B. 6278 directed the Division to develop and provide services to individuals with autism spectrum disorder, as well as serve as the lead agency for the Combating Autism Act.

<http://ct.gov/dds/cwp/view.asp?a=2730&q=442840>

The Division also assumed responsibility for services provided as part of the pilot program previously created under H.B. 5666. The pilot program, which had provided case management and other supports and services to adults with autism spectrum disorders who were not then eligible for other types of

2016 State Autism Profiles CONNECTICUT

services in the previous system, was discontinued with the passage of H.B. 6278.

http://www.ct.gov/dds/lib/dds/autism/pilot_program_outcome_study.pdf

http://www.ct.gov/dds/lib/dds/autism/final_autism_report.pdf

Introduced as H.B. 6737 in the 2015 legislative session and enacted as *Public Law 15-209*, the new law imposes new requirements on the Department of Developmental Services to report annually to the Public Health Committee on the activities of the department's (1) Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services and (2) Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council.

https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/cgabillstatus/cgabillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&which_year=2015&bill_num=6737

STATE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR

The Connecticut General Assembly meets annually on the Wednesday after the first Monday in January. The 2016 Regular Session convened on February 3, 2016 and adjourned on May 4, 2016. The 2017 Session is expected to convene on January 4, 2017 and adjourn in May or June of that year.

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/>

Sponsors of Autism Legislation

Sen. Martin M. Looney (D-New Haven) District 11

Sen. Andrew M. Maynard (D-Griswold) District 18

Sen. Kevin Kelly (R-Monroe) District 21

Sen. Antonietta Boucher (R-Wilton) District 26

Sen. Robert J. Kane (R-Hartford) District 32

Rep. Catherine F. Abercrombie (D-Meriden) District 83

Rep. David K. Labriola (R-Naugatuck) District 131