

# 2016 State Autism Profiles IOWA

## DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2000, 665 or 0.92% of children ages 3-21 who received special education services in Iowa have autism. In 2014-2015, 721 or 1.13% of children with disabilities ages 3-21 who received special education services in Iowa have autism.

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

	2000-2001	2014-2015
Age 3-5	128	73
Age 6-21	537	648
Age 3-21	665	721

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

	2000-2001	2014-2015
Age 3-5	5,580	6,322
Age 6-11	29,821	27,147
Age 12-17	33,365	27,470
Age 18-21	3,695	2,927
Age 6-21	66,881	57,544
Age 3-21	72,461	63,866

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

## STATE TASK FORCE

On May 13, 2008, Governor Chester Culver signed into law appropriations legislation (H.S.B. 795/S.F. 2425) creating a thirteen member Iowa Autism Council to study the unique needs of children and adults with autism spectrum disorders. The council advises the state on the development of a coordinated support system to provide diagnostic, intervention and support services for individuals with autism. Members of the autism council includes individuals with autism or their families, educators, health care providers, professionals with an interest in autism, and representatives of related state agencies. The legislation also specified issues that the council should address: early identification, early intervention, special education, training, integration and coordination of community support services, in-home support services, financing options, and data collection. The Council continues to meet regularly within the Department of Education. The 2016 Council priorities and report to the legislature can be found on the Council web page.

<https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/special-education/state-requirements-reports/iowa-autism-council>  
<https://www.educateiowa.gov/documents/legislative-information/2016/02/iowa-autism-council-2016-priorities>

## STATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

On April 29, 2010, Governor Chet Culver signed the S.F. 2531, the Standing Appropriations bill that included an amendment requiring the state employees' health plan provide coverage of autism diagnosis and treatment for state employees and their families. Coverage is subject to a maximum benefit of \$36,000 per year and is available to individuals with autism under 21 years of age. Services include diagnosis, habilitative or rehabilitative care, pharmacy care, psychiatric care, psychological care, therapeutic care, applied behavior analysis (ABA) if prescribed as medically necessary by one of the

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following: a licensed physician, licensed psychologist, licensed social worker, or licensed registered nurse practitioner. The legislation established a \$36,000 annual cap on coverage for children, though no limit on number of visits.

<http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=BillInfo&Service=oldbillbook&ga=83&hbill=HF2531&menu=text>

In 2016, S.F. 2072 was introduced to require certain group health insurance policies, contracts, or plans to provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders for individuals under the age of 26 for services that are prescribed or provided by a physician or licensed psychologist. Coverage would include diagnosis, applied behavior analysis, psychiatric care, pharmacy care, psychological care, and therapeutic care up to \$36,000 annually. This mirrored legislation previously passed for state employees, but would encompass all insurance plans regulated by state insurance rules. Similar bills have been introduced in previous sessions to expand coverage and, as in prior legislatures, no further action was taken.

<https://legiscan.com/IA/bill/SF2072/2015>

### ESSENTIAL HEALTH BENEFITS

It is unclear how autism is covered on Iowa's federally-run exchange. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) published the "Revised Benchmark Benefits Instructions" in May 2014, which indicates that at least some plans on the exchange must offer autism services as "treatment" under "mental health and substance use disorder services, including behavioral health treatment." Further guidance from either Iowa or HHS is needed.

(Wellmark Inc.; Alliance Select, Copayment Plus)

### MEDICAID

Beginning in 2016, Iowa's traditional Medicaid program will cover autism services under its Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) program. Iowa EPSDT endorses the AAP recommendation for developmental and autism screening for all children.

<http://www.iowaepsdt.org/iowa-epsdt/developmental-care/>

Iowa does not have any waivers specific to individuals with autism. Individuals with autism can be served on any waiver if they meet the criteria for that waiver. It is most common for individuals with autism to be served by the HCBS Intellectual Disabilities waiver.

[http://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid-chip-program-information/by-topics/waivers/waivers\\_faceted.html](http://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid-chip-program-information/by-topics/waivers/waivers_faceted.html)

### EDUCATION

#### *Noncategorical Definition in Education*

The Iowa Department of Education has adopted the position that disability labels across all ages are not needed in the educational setting. Each individual who has a disability, and who by reason of the disability needs special education and related services, is regarded as an eligible individual.

<https://www.educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/Iowa%20Administrative%20Rules%20of%20Special%20Education%202010.pdf>

<http://www.aea10.k12.ia.us/divlearn/specialeducation/docs/spedeligstandardsjuly2006.pdf>

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H.F. 2031 was introduced in January 2008, which includes a requirement for teachers to be trained in the awareness and preparation for instructing students with autism. The original language in the legislation included funds for the Iowa Department of Education to set up the training for teachers. Additionally, the legislation would create an Autism Advisory Council to advise the state board of education and board of educational examiners regarding the best practices for school districts on the education of students with autism, and to make quarterly recommendations on improving state programs and policies. H.F. 2031 was introduced to the Education Committee and went to the Subcommittee where the bill was defeated and replaced by language that became the Iowa Autism Council. (*See: State Task Force*)

### OTHER STATE RESOURCES

#### ***The Autism Support Program***

In 2013, the Iowa General Assembly established through S.F. 446 a new Autism Support Program to provide funding for applied behavior analysis (ABA) services to children under the age of nine with a diagnosis of autism who are not otherwise eligible for such services through Medicaid or private health insurance. Funded with nearly \$5 million from the legislature, the state contracted with Magellan Behavioral Health to administer the program which began enrolling participants April 1, 2014. The Autism Support Program will assist non-Medicaid covered families with incomes at or below 400-percent of the federal poverty level by providing coverage from the state for ABA services (with cost sharing from the family).

<http://www.magellanofiowa.com/benefits-and-services-ia/autism-support-program.aspx>

#### ***Regional Autism Assistance Program (RAP)***

The Regional Autism Assistance Program coordinates community-based services and support for individuals with autism as part of a joint effort with the Bureau of Learner Strategies and Supports at the Iowa Department of Education, Child Health Specialty Clinics, and the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of Iowa Health Care in Iowa City. The RAP Expert Panel Advisory Committee reviews and makes decisions about activities and initiatives in autism.

<http://www.chsciowa.org/regional-autism-assistance-program.asp>

#### ***Behavior Analyst Program Fund***

In the 2015 session, the legislature passed and the Governor signed into law a new program to fund the education of certified behavior analysts and certified assistant behavior analysts to be housed in the Iowa Department of Public Health. The program will provide grants to Iowa resident and nonresident applicants who have been accepted for admission or are attending a board of regents university, community college, or an accredited private institution, are enrolled in a program to be eligible for board certification as a behavior analyst or assistant behavior analyst, and demonstrate financial need. Priority in the awarding of a grant shall be given to applicants who are residents of Iowa.

*Iowa Code section 135.181.*

SF 505, Division X Autism, Sec. 68 (page 71 of SF 505)

<https://legiscan.com/IA/bill/SF505/2015>

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## STATE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR

The 2015 Iowa Legislature meets starting in January for 110 days in odd-numbered years or for 100 days in even-numbered years. The 2016 Regular Session convened on January 11, 2016 and adjourned on April 29, 2016. The 2017 session is expected to convene in January of 2017.

<http://www.legis.iowa.gov>

### *Sponsors of Autism Legislation*

Sen. Rick Bertrand (R-Woodbury) District 7  
Sen. Jeff Danielson (D-Waterloo) District 10  
Sen. Amanda Ragan (D-Mason City) District 27  
Sen. Wally E. Horn (D-Cedar Rapids) District 35

Rep. Todd E. Taylor (D-Cedar Rapids) District 70  
Rep. David E. Heaton (R-Mt. Pleasant) District 84