

2016 State Autism Profiles MISSISSIPPI

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2000, 419 or 0.67% of children ages 3-21 who received special education services in Mississippi have autism. In 2014-2015, 4,027 or 6.06% of children with disabilities ages 3-21 who received special education services have autism.

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

	2000-2001	2014-2015
Age 3-5	34	343
Age 6-21	385	3,684
Age 3-21	419	4,027

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

	2000-2001	2014-2015
Age 3-5	6,944	9,299
Age 6-11	28,423	31,322
Age 12-17	24,217	22,969
Age 18-21	2,697	2,858
Age 6-21	55,337	57,149
Age 3-21	62,281	66,448

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

STATE TASK FORCE

Autism Advisory Committee

During the 2011 session, the Mississippi legislature enacted H.B. 1125 to create an Autism Advisory Committee to study, make recommendations and develop a strategic plan on how best to educate and train students with autism or ASD to maximize their potential productivity with the workforce and to develop an annual plan. The plan is due in July of each year. 2015 was the most recent report filed.

http://www.dmh.ms.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Mississippi-Autism-Advisory-Committee-2015-Report-FINAL_2.11.2016.pdf

Caring for Mississippi Individuals with Autism Task Force

H.B. 1267 was signed into law by Gov. Haley Barbour on March 26, 2007, creating a state taskforce to evaluate the needs of individuals with autism, in particular the areas of medical, education, and early intervention, and to propose recommendations for improving services for autism in the state. The task force was comprised of 15 members who represented state agencies, parents, and other professionals with an interest in autism. Susan Buttross, M.D. served as the chair, and Nicole Boyd, J.D. served as the vice-chair. The task force found that care and services for people with autism were inadequate. To address this problem, the task force proposed recommendations, such as a waiver that would provide services to individuals with autism. The task force also recommended that all teachers and special education professionals receive better training about autism spectrum disorders and that community colleges offer classes on the autism spectrum disorders so that graduates are better prepared to work with individuals with autism. A final report was submitted to the governor and legislature on December 1, 2007.

<http://www.dmh.state.ms.us/pdf/AutismReportonWeb.pdf>

State and School Employees Health Insurance Management Board Task Force

In March 2014, Mississippi adopted H.B. 542, an act which requires the State and School Employees Health Insurance Management Board to review and study whether to expand coverage currently provided for the treatment of autism under the state and school employees health insurance plan. The board shall submit a report including analysis, conclusions, and recommendations by December 1, 2014.

2016 State Autism Profiles MISSISSIPPI

STATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

In 2015, Mississippi became the 40th state to approve autism insurance legislation. H.B. 885 requires that health insurers cover screening, diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorder in children. Group and individual plans are covered, although while small employers (less than 100 employees) who offer insurance to their employees must offer the autism coverage, the plan may charge the plan holder for the cost of the additional coverage. Treatment is defined as medically necessary, evidence-based care prescribed for an individual with ASD by a licensed physician or psychologist including, but not limited to behavioral health treatment, pharmacy care, psychiatric care, psychological care, and therapeutic care. Coverage applied behavior analysis (ABA) is limited to 25 hours per week, and shall not be required beyond the age of 8 years. Coverage for applied behavior analysis pursuant to an ongoing treatment plan may be continued beyond age 8 if found to be medically necessary.

<https://legiscan.com/MS/bill/HB885/2015>

ESSENTIAL HEALTH BENEFITS

Mississippi's benchmark plan does not include autism services or applied behavior analysis (ABA) In fact, the benchmark plan specifically excludes "treatment or testing related to autistic disease." Its exchange is being run by the federal government.

(Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi; Network Blue)

MEDICAID

Mississippi Home and Community-Based Services Waiver: MS Intellectual Disabilities/DD

Implemented on July 1, 2013, this waiver allows for people with developmental disabilities, such as autism, to remain living at home and within their community if they meet the ICF/MR requirements. Services provided under this waiver include: day services (adults), prevocational, residential habilitation, respite, support coordination, supported employment, behavior support and intervention, home and community supports, specialized medical supplies, and therapy services. There is no age restriction on this waiver, and it expires on June 30, 2018.

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

<https://medicaid.ms.gov/programs/mental-health/special-mental-health-initiatives/>

Autism Pilot Program

The Autism Pilot Program is a time-limited pilot program for children 18 months old through 8 years old, and is provided with funding available through the Balancing Incentive Program (BIP). The Autism Pilot Program uses evidence based practices to meet the individualized needs of the children in this program.

The pilot program operated through September 2015.

<https://medicaid.ms.gov/programs/mental-health/special-mental-health-initiatives/>

EDUCATION

Mississippi defines autism as a developmental disability that affects communications and social interactions, usually manifested before the age of three, which adversely affects a child's educational performance. To be eligible to receive special education services, a student must undergo a comprehensive assessment. The assessment includes physical and emotional tests, as well as achievement tests to see if the student is performing below their age norms. Teachers may also be asked to provide a narrative or developmental history of the student.

2016 State Autism Profiles MISSISSIPPI

In the 2014 session, H.B. 562 was introduced to provide an Autism Therapy Scholarship whereby additional funds would be provided for students with autism spectrum disorder to receive therapy. The bill died in committee.

Licensing of Behavior Analysts

H.B. 885 (see *State Insurance Coverage* above) also creates the Mississippi Autism Board to issue and revoke licenses for behavior analysts, monitor license compliance, investigate potential violations and generally regulate the profession.

<https://legiscan.com/MS/text/HB885/2015>

STATE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR

The Mississippi State Legislature meets annually on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January. The 2016 session convened on January 5, 2016 and adjourned on April 21, 2016. The 2017 session is expected to convene on January 3, 2017 and adjourn on April 2, 2017.

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/>

Sponsors of Autism Legislation

Sen. Rita Parks Potts (R-Corinth) District 4

Rep. Steve Massengill (R-Hickory Flat) District 13

Rep. Charles Busby (R-Jackson) District 111