

# 2016 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 2014-2015, 16,930 or 8.64 % 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 2000-2001 and 2014-2015**  
(Child Count by Age Group)

	2000-2001	2014-2015
<b>Age 3-5</b>	261	2,026
<b>Age 6-21</b>	2,374	14,904
<b>Age 3-21</b>	2,635	16,930

*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 2000-2001 and 2014-2015**  
(Child Count by Age Group)

	2000-2001	2014-2015
<b>Age 3-5</b>	17,361	18,887
<b>Age 6-11</b>	84,191	83,450
<b>Age 12-17</b>	66,212	83,359
<b>Age 18-21</b>	5,303	10,349
<b>Age 6-21</b>	155,706	177,158
<b>Age 3-21</b>	173,067	196,045

*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 submitted their report in May 2010.

<http://ncleg.net/Library/studies/2010/st11830.pdf>

## STATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

In October 2015, Governor Pat McCrory signed autism insurance legislation into law in North Carolina. S.B. 676 provides coverage by health benefit plans for screening, diagnosis, and treatment of autism spectrum disorder. The legislation further prevents any insurer from termination of coverage solely on the basis of an autism diagnosis. Covered services include adaptive behavior treatment, pharmacy care,

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psychiatric care, psychological care, and therapeutic care. Eligible individuals ages 18 years or younger may receive up to \$40,000 a year of adaptive behavior treatment, defined as “behavioral and developmental interventions that systematically manage instructional and environmental factors or the consequences of behavior that have been shown to be clinically effective through research published in peer reviewed scientific journals and based upon randomized, quasi-experimental, or single subject designs ...” for the purpose of ...”increase(ing) appropriate or adaptive behaviors, (ii) decreas(ing) maladaptive behaviors, or (iii) develop(ing), maintain(ing), or restor(ing), to the maximum extent practicable, the functioning of an individual.” The statute is effective January 1, 2016.

*N.C. Gen. Stat. 58-3-192, as added by SB 676 (2015)*

<http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2015/Bills/Senate/PDF/S676v4.pdf>

Previously the State Employees’ Health Plan had voluntarily adopted an autism insurance benefit that began in January 2015.

Additional 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.

### ESSENTIAL HEALTH BENEFITS

North Carolina’s benchmark plan does not include autism services or applied behavior analysis (ABA) in its Essential Health Benefits package. Its exchange is being run by the federal government. (Blue Cross and Blue Shield of NC; Blue Options)

### MEDICAID

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

This waiver, implemented on October 1, 2012, 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 and intellectual disabilities. This waiver expires on September 30, 2017.

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

This waiver, implemented on October 1, 2012, 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 intellectual disabilities. This waiver expires September 30, 2017.

<https://www2.ncdhhs.gov/hcbs/index.html>

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## 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)

### ***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 2015-2016 Biennium convened for the first half on January 14, 2015 and adjourned in October 2015. The legislature reconvened on April 25, 2016 and adjourned on June 3, 2016. The legislature will reconvene on January 11, 2017.

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

### ***Sponsors of Autism Legislation***

Rep. Phil Shepard (R-Onslow) District 15

Rep. Susi H. Hamilton (D-Wilmington)

District 18

Rep. Rosa U. Gill (D-Raleigh) District 33

Michael H. Wray (D-Gaston) District 27

Rep. Darren G. Jackson (D-Raleigh) District 39

Rep. Rick Glazier (D-Cumberland) District 44

Rep. Charles Graham (D-Lumberton)

District 47

Rep. Tricia Cotham (D- Mecklenburg)

District 100

Rep. Chuck McGrady (R-Henderson)

District 117