

2016 State Autism Profiles TEXAS

DEMOGRAPHICS2

In 2000, 7,131 or 1.45% of children ages 3-21 who received special education services in Texas have autism. In 2014-2015, 51,330 or 11.4% of children with disabilities ages 3-21 who received special education services have autism.

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

	2000-2001	2014-2015
Age 3-5	1,108	7,464
Age 6-21	6,023	43,866
Age 3-21	7,131	51,330

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

	2000-2001	2014-2015
Age 3-5	36,442	42,654
Age 6-11	210,873	186,969
Age 12-17	223,824	196,829
Age 18-21	20,503	25,171
Age 6-21	455,200	408,969
Age 3-21	491,642	451,623

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

STATE TASK FORCE

Texas Council on Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders

The Texas Council on Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders (TCAPDD) was established by legislation in 1987 that added Chapter 114 to the Human Resources Code. Its mission is to advise and make recommendations to state agencies and the state Legislature to ensure that the needs of persons of all ages with autism and other pervasive developmental disorders and their families are addressed and that all available resources are coordinated to meet those needs. The TCAPDD is composed of seven public members appointed by the governor and representatives from key state agencies involved with the regulation and administration of services for individuals with autism. The Council works to support and implement the *Texas State Plan for Autism Spectrum Disorders*, currently covering 2010-2014. The November 2014 report is available.

<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/councils/autism/autism.shtml>

<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/councils/autism/publications/stateplan/2010stateplan.pdf>

<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/autism/AutismReport2014/index.html>

STATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

Texas provides health insurance coverage for all generally recognized autism services prescribed in the treatment plan by the primary care physician. Originally covering only enrollees older than 2 and less than 6 years of age, the legislation was amended in H.B. 451, and signed by the governor on June 19, 2009, to expand coverage to enrollees diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders who are older than 2 years and less than 18 years of age. (*Texas Insurance Code Chapter 1355.015*) Generally recognized services may include the following: evaluation and assessment services; applied behavior analysis (ABA); behavior training and behavior management; speech therapy; occupational therapy; physical therapy; and medications or nutritional supplements used to address symptoms of autism spectrum disorder.

In 2013, H.B. 3276 was passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor to amend the provision of the law requiring health plans to cover the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorder. At a

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minimum, a health benefit plan must provide coverage for screening a child for autism spectrum disorder at 18 and 24 months. However, the legislature specifically noted that this coverage does not apply if a determination is made under the Affordable Care Act that this benefit would be in addition to the Essential Health Benefits package and that therefore, the state will not pay for the additional service.

<http://legiscan.com/TX/text/HB3276/2013>

ESSENTIAL HEALTH BENEFITS

Under the Affordable Care Act, Texas will offer autism services including applied behavioral analysis (ABA) as an essential health benefit on its federally-run exchange. The benchmark plan offers autism services under both “behavioral health treatment,” and “habilitation services.” Habilitation services include physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy for the treatment of autism for children up to age 10.

(Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas; BestChoice PPO)

EDUCATION

Licensure of Behavior Analysts

Introduced in 2015, H.B. 2703 would establish the Texas Board of Behavior Analyst Examiners and the requirement to obtain a license to practice as a behavior analyst or assistant behavior analyst in Texas. The bill passed the House and was referred to the Health and Human Services Committee in the Senate. No further action was taken. A similar bill, S.B. 1871, was also referred to Senate Health and Human Services Committee where no further action was taken.

<https://legiscan.com/TX/bill/HB2703/2015>

<https://legiscan.com/TX/bill/SB1871/2015>

Education Service Centers

Through the network of 20 regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) around the state and in conjunction with the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Texas Statewide Leadership for Autism Training provides a mechanism to access training, technical assistance, support, and resources for educators who serve students with autism.

<http://www.txautism.net/>

Legislation

Section 89.1055(e) was amended to include an “Autism Supplement” that clarified existing considerations in the individualized education program (IEP) for students with autism spectrum disorders and added new considerations in the IEP. The eleven strategies are optional unless required in the IEP by the admission, review, and dismissal committee (*19 T.A.C. Section 89.1055(e)*).

<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter089/ch089aa.html>

EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Texas State Conference on Autism

The Texas Education Agency, in conjunction with the Region 2 ESC, sponsors an annual statewide conference to provide resources and information to parents, educators, and other professionals working with individuals with autism. The 22nd Annual Texas Autism Conference took place in San Antonio over August 4-5, 2016.

<http://txautism.esc2.net/>

In 2015, the 84th legislature appropriated funds to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to fund research and services to address parent mediated treatments, training of teachers and

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paraprofessionals in classrooms on ABA strategies and to develop innovative autism treatment models. \$4,050,000 per year for FY16 and FY17 will go to Texas universities with autism research centers already in place.

<https://legiscan.com/TX/bill/HB1/2015>

<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=C7B4CD69-AEC2-05D8-D4FA867A59707EF7>

OTHER STATE RESOURCES

Texas Autism Research and Resource Center (TARRC)

On May 27, 2009, the governor signed H.B. 1547, requiring the Health and Human Services Commission to establish and administer an autism spectrum disorders resource center. The center will collect and distribute information and research, conduct training and development for those working with individuals with autism, coordinate with autism service providers, and provide support for families affected by autism and other developmental disorders. The TARRC is a web based center that provides resources for families and the community including first responder training, an annual conference that is focused on sharing innovative research that has practical application in the field of autism spectrum disorder and the Community Assessment and Planning Toolkit (CAPT) that was developed to help community leaders assess and, where necessary, plan to improve the way their community welcomes and supports Texans with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other disabilities, as well as identify how those people contribute to their community

<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/tarrc/index.html>

Texas Legislature Approves Program for Autism

The Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) Autism Program was developed as a pilot project in Fiscal Year 2008, intended to extend treatment services, including applied behavior analysis (ABA) to children ages 3-8 with a diagnosis on the autism spectrum. Initially, the pilot served Houston and Dallas/Fort Worth. Subsequent increases in funding from the Texas legislature allowed the program to expand to Austin and San Antonio.

The appropriations bill of the 2013 legislature required development and implementation of a plan to increase the number of children receiving services through the program. As part of the plan, DARS contracted with the University of Texas (UT) to research evidence-based treatment, analyze the outcome data for children in the program, and make recommendations for changes to serve more while continuing to make a measurable improvement in behavior and development. As a result of the recommendations, the rules were changed, effective September 1, 2014, to create two classifications of ABA that are used with children with autism: comprehensive and focused. The new rules also expanded the age range to include children through 15 years of age (age out at 16) and expanded services to two additional geographic areas of Texas: El Paso and Corpus Christi.

<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/autism/index.shtml>

<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/autism/AutismNews.shtml>

In 2015, the 84th Texas Legislature codified the program, appropriated additional funds (\$14.4 million for the biennium) and discontinued the comprehensive ABA services. The result is that focused ABA services will now be available in previously unserved areas of the state including Bryan, Brownwood, Edinburg, Lubbock, San Angelo, and Texarkana.

<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/autism/index.shtml>

<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/autism/ServicesProvided.shtml>

<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/autism/AutismNews.shtml>

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STATE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR

The Texas Legislature meets in Regular Session on the second Tuesday in January for approximately five months every other year. The 84th Regular Session convened on January 13, 2015 and adjourned on June 1, 2015. The Legislature did not convene in 2016. The 85th Regular Session is expected to begin on January 10, 2017.

<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us>

Sponsors of Autism Legislation

Sen. Rodney Ellis (D-Houston) District 13
Sen. Kirk Watson (D-Austin) District 14
Sen. Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) District 21
Sen. Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D-Brownsville) District 27

Rep. Ryan Guillen (D-Rio Grande City) District 31
Rep. Larry Gonzalez (R-Round Rock) District 52
Rep. Ron Simmons (R-Carrollton) District 55
Rep. Alma Allen (D-Harris) District 131
Rep. Senfronia Thompson (D-Houston) District 141
Rep. Harold Dutton, Jr. (D-Harris) District 142