2012 State Autism Profiles
MASSACHUSETTS

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2000, 806 or 0.50% of children ages 3-21 who received special education services in Massachusetts have autism. In 2010-2011, 12,114 or 7.23% of children with disabilities ages 3-21 who received special education services have autism.

Table 1-1: IDEA Part B - Children with Autism in for 1999-2000 and 2010-2011 (Child Count by Age Group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>1999-2000</th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 3-5</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>2,182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 6-11</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>5,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 12-17</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>3,789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 18-21</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 6-21</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>9,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 3-21</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>12,114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Reported by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts 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 Massachusetts for 1999-2000 and 2010-2011 (Child Count by Age Group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>1999-2000</th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 3-5</td>
<td>14,328</td>
<td>16,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 6-11</td>
<td>66,100</td>
<td>66,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 12-17</td>
<td>73,344</td>
<td>75,622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 18-21</td>
<td>8,444</td>
<td>8,891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 6-21</td>
<td>147,888</td>
<td>150,864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 3-21</td>
<td>162,216</td>
<td>167,526</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

STATE TASK FORCE

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts does not have an active task force on autism at this time. However, H.B. 155 introduced in January 2009 would establish and regulate a special commission for the investigation and study of services and support for individuals with autism spectrum disorders. H.B. 155 successfully passed the Joint Committee on Children and Families and was sent to the Joint Committee on Rules on July 13, 2009 for further action. H.B. 4382 was introduced as a recommended new draft for H.B. 155, and was substituted for such bill. H.B. 4382 was sent to the Governor on April 15, 2010. The commission is set up to investigate the range of services and support that are important for individuals with autism spectrum disorders to reach their full potential. These issues include job attainment, employment, independent living, best practices, and many other services necessary. The commission is required to report its results of the investigation to the general court, clerk of the Senate and clerk of the House.


STATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

On August 4, 2010, Governor Deval Patrick signed H.B. 4935, An Act Relative to Insurance Coverage for Autism Spectrum Disorder, into law. The law includes coverage of include habilitative or rehabilitative, pharmacy, psychiatric, psychological, and therapeutic care, including Applied Behavioral Analysis. The law also contains a three year opt-out provision for health insurance plans if they can prove that providing coverage of ABA has increased their premiums by more than 1%. There are no dollar or age caps on benefits and the law applies only to fully-funded health plans governed by state and to state health plans offered to public employees.
Also, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires coverage for any medically necessary early intervention services provided by a certified early intervention specialist for children from birth to three years old at a maximum of $5,200 per year per child and total of $15,600 for the whole period. (MA Gen. L. ch. 175 §47c)

In the 2011 session, S.B. 1174 was introduced to define rules and regulations for the testing, treatment, care, and parental counseling of people with autism and autism spectrum disorders. The Commissioner would be charged with determining the earliest age for screening and the method of screening in light of advances in medical science. No further action was taken.

MEDICAID

Massachusetts Home and Community-Based Services Waiver: MA Children's Autism Spectrum Disorder

The Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, Autism Division received approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to offer a home and community-based services waiver for children with autism, which was implemented on October 1, 2010. The waiver is open to children under 9 years old who are residents of Massachusetts with a confirmed diagnosis of autism, and has a capacity of 80 children. The waiver provides individualized autism support planning for each child served, focusing primarily on education and expanded habilitation. Other services offered, if appropriate, include habilitation, community integration activities, independent living skills, family training, respite, homemaker, individual goods and services, adaptive aids, home adaptation, and vehicle modification. This waiver expires on September 30, 2015.

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

EDUCATION

Massachusetts follows the federal definition (34 CFR 300.7) when providing special educational services for children with autism spectrum disorder. In April 2006, H.B. 1123 was signed into law, which amended the state laws guiding the education of children with special needs. H.B. 1123 notes that the individualized education program for children with autism spectrum disorders should cover the following needs: verbal and non-communication skills; social interaction skills and proficiency; responses to sensory experiences; resistance to change in environment or daily routines; engagement in repetitive behaviors and movements; and positive behavioral interventions, strategies and supports. (MA Gen Law ch. 71B§3)

Legislation

H.B. 1856 was introduced in the 2011 session to support and increase the number of qualified providers of intensive intervention providers for children with autism spectrum disorders, The bill directs the Secretary of Health & Human Services and the Secretary of Education to collaborate with parents, advocates, educators and service providers for the study and development of recommendations on intensive intervention services for children with autism. The bill was referred to the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities. The Senate concurred on June 21, 2012.

H.B. 2710 was introduced in the 2011 session to establish a commission to study the feasibility of a charter school for students on the autism spectrum. It was reported to the House in a study
order from the Education Committee and referred to the Rules Committee on September 27, 2012.

**Other State Actions**

H.B. 156, introduced in January 2009, directed the commissioner of the Massachusetts rehabilitation commission to establish a two-year pilot program for twenty-five adults with Asperger’s syndrome and other autism spectrum disorders to provide services to lead to paid employment. It also requires the commission establish an advisory board of community professionals to advise the project and to submit a final report at the conclusion of the pilot. After failure to pass during the session, H.B. 156 was reintroduced in the 2011 session as H.B. 3104. H.B. 3104 also failed to pass during the session.

In the 2011 session, H.B. 2909 and S.B. 1197 were introduced in the 2011 session to require criminal justice training for police and correction officers regarding interactions with individuals with autism spectrum disorder. The bills were not passed during the session.

**State Legislative Calendar**

The Massachusetts General Court meets in regular session annually. The 2012 session convened on January 4, 2012 and is expected to adjourn on January 1, 2013. The 2013 session is expected to convene in January 2013 and is expected to adjourn in January 2014.

http://www.mass.gov/legis/

*Sponsors of Autism Legislation:*

Sen. Katherine Clark (D-Melrose)  
Rep. Garrett J. Bradley (D-Hingham)  
Rep. Paul Brodeur (D-Melrose)  
Rep. Cheryl Coakley-Rivera (D-Springfield)  
Rep. Alice Peisch (D-Wellesley)  
Rep. David Sullivan (D-Fall River)