

2012 State Autism Profiles

ALABAMA

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2000, 849 or 0.85% of children ages 3-21 who received special education services in Alabama have autism. In 2010-2011, 4,391 or 5.34% of children with disabilities ages 3-21 who received special education services have autism.

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

	1999-2000	2010-2011
Age 3-5	84	406
Age 6-11	479	2,154
Age 12-17	248	1,582
Age 18-21	38	249
Age 6-21	765	3,985
Age 3-21	849	4,391

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

	1999-2000	2008-2009
Age 3-5	7,554	7,492
Age 6-11	43,047	33,679
Age 12-17	44,068	35,792
Age 18-21	5,159	5,323
Age 6-21	92,274	74,794
Age 3-21	99,828	82,286

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

STATE TASK FORCE

Alabama Autism Task Force

In March 2007, Governor Bob R. Riley, Jr. signed H.J.R. 23 to create a statewide task force in autism. The Alabama Autism Task Force met for one year to examine the diagnosis and treatment of individuals with autism and to report to the legislature their findings and recommendations. The task force was composed of 25 members, including legislators and representatives from state agencies, healthcare providers, educators, and professionals with an interest in autism. H.J.R. 12 was signed by Gov. Riley on April 8, 2008, extending the reporting date for the task force to the third day of the 2009 Legislative Session. Rep. Cam Ward (R-Alabaster) served as the chair.

<http://www.camward.com/alabama-autism-task-force>

Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council

In 2009, Governor Bob R. Riley, Jr. signed H.B. 41, creating the Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council to discuss policy questions pertaining to autism and to make recommendations. The council consists of one lead agency and representatives from other participating agencies in the fields of healthcare, research, education, and lawmaking. Each year the council will develop a long-term plan for a comprehensive statewide system of care to individuals with autism spectrum disorders.

<http://www.autism.alabama.gov/>

STATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

In May 2012, S.B. 283, also known as the “Riley” Ward Act, became law. The law directs insurance providers to offer plans that include coverage for the treatment of autism through age 9. Businesses can choose whether or not they want to provide coverage for employees, or parents could obtain the coverage as a rider. S.B. 283 is not an insurance mandate for autism services, but rather instruct insurance

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companies to offer coverage of screening, diagnosis, and evidence-based treatments (such as Applied Behavioral Analysis, or ABA) for people with autism. The policyholder would have to pay an extra or more expensive premium if he or she opted to accept the coverage. (*Alabama Act No 2012-298*)

As noted above, Alabama currently does not offer mandated health insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of individuals with autism. However, H.B. 677 was signed into law in 2000, providing equitable health insurance coverage for mental illnesses as defined by the International Classification of Diseases, including autism spectrum disorders. Under the law, group health benefits plans must provide coverage for the treatment and diagnosis of mental illnesses, as with medical illnesses (*Alabama Code §27-54-1*).

OTHER STATE ACTIVITY

In 2011, the state legislature passed and the governor signed H.B. 502 to expand the use of a guide dog in places of public accommodation from individuals with visual impairments to people with a physical disability. Physical disability is defined as having a visual impairment, hearing impairment or autism spectrum disorder. *2011 HB502 (Act No. 2011-578)*.

In 2009, the governor also signed H.B. 615, creating a system of non-residential autism centers that will provide resource and training services for persons of all ages with autism or not otherwise specified pervasive developmental disorders. Each center will work with a constituency board whose members will be chosen by the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives and will number no less than six. Each board member must either have a developmental disability or be a family member of someone who does. Each board will meet quarterly with the staff of its respective autism center to provide advice on policies, priorities, and activities. Each center will provide individual and direct family assistance, technical assistance and consultation services, professional training programs, and public education programs. *2009 HB615 (Act No. 2009-592)*

EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Alabama Autism Conference

The Alabama Autism Conference provides professionals with an interest in autism information on the latest in autism research. The conference is focused on professionals who provide services to individuals with autism and researchers. The 11th Annual Alabama Autism Conference was held in March 2012 at the University of Alabama – Tuscaloosa.

<http://autism.ua.edu/index.html>

STATE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR

The Alabama Legislature meets in Regular Session for no more than 30 Legislative Days within the framework of a 105-calendar day period. The 2012 session convened on February 7, 2012 and adjourned on May 16, 2012. The 2012 First Special Session convened on May 17, 2012 and adjourned on May 24, 2012. The 2013 session will convene on February 5, 2013 and is expected to adjourn on May 1, 2013. <http://www.legislature.state.al.us/index.html>

Sponsors of Autism Legislation:

Sen. Quinton T. Ross, Jr. (D-Montgomery) District 26
Sen. Cam Ward (R-Bibb, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby)
District 14

Rep. Randy Davis (R-Daphne) District 96
Rep. Mac McCutcheon (R-Limestone, Madison) District 25
Rep. Arthur Payne (R-Jefferson) District 44