

2009 State Autism Profiles NEW JERSEY

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2000, 3,322 or 1.50% of children ages 3-21 who received special education services in New Jersey have autism. In 2007-2008, 9,812 or 3.92% of children with disabilities ages 3-21 who received special education services have autism.

Table 1-1: IDEA Part B - Children with Autism in New Jersey for 1999-2000 and 2007-2008
(Child Count by Age Group)

	1999-2000	2007-2008
Age 3-5	397	948
Age 6-11	2,124	5,407
Age 12-17	654	2,937
Age 18-21	147	520
Age 6-21	2,925	8,864
Age 3-21	3,322	9,812

Source: Reported by the State of New Jersey 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 New Jersey for 1999-2000 and 2007-2008
(Child Count by Age Group)

	1999-2000	2007-2008
Age 3-5	16,361	19,580
Age 6-11	102,704	105,315
Age 12-17	92,176	113,232
Age 18-21	10,474	11,972
Age 6-21	205,354	230,519
Age 3-21	221,715	250,099

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

STATE TASK FORCE

New Jersey Adults with Autism Task Force

In September 2007, A-4057/S-2599 was signed into law creating the New Jersey Adults with Autism Task Force. The goals of the task force are to study the needs of adults with autism and offer recommendations for improving support services, particularly in the areas of job training, job placement, housing, and long-term care. The task force has 13-members: six appointed by the governor, five commissioners from state agencies, a member appointed by the Senate President and Speaker of the Assembly. Within twelve months, the task force is expected to prepare a comprehensive plan outlining recommendations and legislation for consideration to the governor and legislature.

https://www.net1.state.nj.us/GOV/APPT/GOV_APPT_WEB/Default.aspx

STATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

New Jersey requires individual, group, and small health insurance coverage for biologically-based mental illnesses, which includes pervasive developmental disorders or autism, under the same terms and conditions as provided for any other sickness. Deductibles, copayments, benefits limits for biologically-based mental illnesses are treated the same as for other sicknesses or illnesses. (*New Jersey 1999 17:48-6v, 17:48A-7u, 17B:26-2.1s*) The law was challenged in the New Jersey State Supreme Court by the parents of a five-year old autistic boy whose applied behavioral analysis therapy was denied coverage by the state health insurance plan. In September 2007, the high court ruled in favor of the family, ordering the health insurance company to pay for the full cost of all therapy. (*Jake Micheletti v. State Health Benefits Commission*) Legislation has been introduced that would require health benefits coverage for the expenses of certain treatments deemed medically necessary in the treatment of autism spectrum disorders (autism, childhood disintegrative disorder, Asperger's Syndrome, pervasive developmental disorder) as prescribed by the covered individual's physician. Covered treatments include physical therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and evidence-based behavioral interventions. A-2238 has been referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee in February 2008, and S-1651 was referred to the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee. No further action has been taken.

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EDUCATION

Gov. Corzine signed A-4055/S-2558 into law on September 2007 requiring teacher training in awareness and instruction methods for students with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities. Under the new law, the Commissioner of Education is expected to provide recommendations to address the needs of students with autism, including reviewing curriculum, assistive technology, and inclusive educational practices. Additionally, through the Governor's 2007 Initiative on Autism, the state offered \$15 million in grants to 55 local school districts and regional special education public school providers to create new programs; expand existing programs, or enhance services and supports for students with autism.

Legislation

A-1234/S-360 was introduced January 8, 2008 to create an Autism Education Council with the Department of Education to award grants to public schools and institutions in order to broaden the services and improve instruction methods for students with autism. The bill was referred to the Assembly and Senate Education Committees; no further action was taken.

AR 105 passed the Assembly and was filed with the Secretary of State on May 20, 2008 which urges the State Board of Education and Commission on Higher Education to establish student partners for students with autism spectrum disorders from grades 7 to 12 and also for students in college.

OTHER STATE RESOURCES

New Jersey Governor's Council on Medical Research and Treatment for Autism

The New Jersey Governor's Council on Autism was established by statute in 1999 to research into the cause and treatments for autism spectrum disorder. Funding was renewed in 2000, and in 2003 a \$1 surcharge was added to moving violations for five years; funds generated from the violations would go directly to the council. A-4059/S-2569 was signed into law September 2007 extends funding by eliminating a five-year sunset provision. A-4054/S-698 was also signed into law to restructure the council and renamed the council to the New Jersey Governor's Council on Medical Research and Treatment for Autism.

<http://www.njautismcouncil.org/>

First Responders Training

A1908 was signed into law by Gov. Corzine on September 9, 2008 and authorizes the development of a training program for first responders, police and other emergency personnel on the appropriate recognition and response techniques when encountering an individual with autism spectrum disorders.

Registry

The Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Health and Senior Services received funding to establish a mandatory autism registry. The registry would amend the birth-defects registry by requiring health care practitioners to report children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders from birth through the 21st birthday. The registry would allow the state to connect those diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder to state-provided social and economic assistance services.

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STATE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR

The New Jersey Legislature meets in Regular Session for a two-year term split into two annual sessions and begins the second Tuesday in January of the even-numbered year. The 2009 legislative session convened January 13 and is expected to adjourn January 11, 2010.

<http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/>

Sponsors of Autism Legislation:

Sen. Jim Whelan (D-Northfield) District 2
Sen. Andrew R. Ciesla (R-Brick) District 10
Sen. Joseph F. Vitale (D-Woodbridge) District 19
Sen. Loretta Weinberg (D-Teaneck) District 37

Rep. Joseph J. Roberts (D-Brooklawn) District 6
Rep. John F. McKeon (D-South Orange) District 27
Rep. Gary Schaer (D-Passaic) District 36
Rep. Fred Scalera (D-Nutley) District 36
Rep. Valerie Vainieri Huttle (D-Englewood) District 37
Rep. Joan Voss (D-Fort Lee) District 38