

# 2008 State Autism Profiles

## TENNESSEE

### DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2000, 1,088 or 0.86% of children ages 3-21 who received special education services in Tennessee have autism. In 2006-2007, 3,362 or 2.80% of children with disabilities ages 3-21 who received special education services have autism.

**Table 1-1: IDEA Part B - Children with Autism in Tennessee for 1999-2000 and 2006-2007**  
(Child Count by Age Group)

	1999-2000	2006-2007
<b>Age 3-5</b>	153	481
<b>Age 6-11</b>	575	1,607
<b>Age 12-17</b>	280	1,118
<b>Age 18-21</b>	80	156
<b>Age 6-21</b>	935	2,881
<b>Age 3-21</b>	1,088	3,362

*Source: Reported by the State of Tennessee 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 Tennessee for 1999-2000 and 2006-2007**  
(Child Count by Age Group)

	1999-2000	2006-2007
<b>Age 3-5</b>	10,699	11,967
<b>Age 6-11</b>	55,756	50,604
<b>Age 12-17</b>	53,161	52,057
<b>Age 18-21</b>	6,247	5,635
<b>Age 6-21</b>	115,164	108,296
<b>Age 3-21</b>	125,863	120,263

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

### STATE TASK FORCE

The State of Tennessee does not have an active task force on autism at this time.

### STATE INSURANCE COVERAGE

Tennessee insurance code (TN Code § 56-7-2367) states that any policy that provides coverage for neurological disorders are required to also provide coverage for autism spectrum disorders for children under 12 years old. Copayment requirements and benefit limits may apply, and it is illegal for an insurance company to refuse to renew or to cancel a contract because of an autism diagnosis.

<http://michie.lexisnexis.com/tennessee/lpext.dll?f=templates&fn=main-h.htm&cp>

### MEDICAID

In February 2007, H.B. 421 and S.B. 638 were introduced during the 105<sup>th</sup> session of the Tennessee General Assembly requesting an expansion of the Medicaid home and community-based waiver for mental retardation and developmental disabilities to include individuals with autism who would otherwise be eligible but do not have a diagnosis of mental retardation. As of March 29, 2007, no further action was taken on H.B. 421. The bill was referred to the Senate Committees on General Welfare and Health & Human Resources on February 12, 2007; no further action has been taken.

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### **EDUCATION**

Tennessee defines autism as a developmental disability that severely affects communications and social interactions, generally evident before the age of three. For a child to be diagnosed as having autism and, therefore, be eligible to receive special education services, a child needs to undergo an evaluation. Included in the evaluation are a parental interview, observations and evaluations, a physical and neurological medical history, and an assessment of the child's education needs. Included in the evaluation are the student's parents, the student's general education teacher, a special education teacher, a psychologist, and physician, and a speech therapist.

<http://tennessee.gov/education/speced/doc/92707Autism.pdf>

### **STATE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR**

The Tennessee General Assembly meets annually beginning the second Tuesday in January. Each session meets for a total of 90 days over a period of two years. The 2008 Legislative Session convened January 8 and adjourned May 23.

<http://www.legislature.state.tn.us/>

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

Sen. Charlotte Burks (D-Monterey) District 15  
Sen. Beverly Marrero (D-Memphis) District 30

Rep. Joanne Favors (D-Chattanooga) District 29  
Rep. Charles Curtiss (D-Sparta) District 43