

White House Fact Sheet: Combating Autism Act of 2006

Today, President Bush Signed The Combating Autism Act Of 2006.

This Act authorizes expanded activities related to autism research, prevention, and treatment through FY 2011. There are more than 1.5 million cases of autism in the United States.

- Since President Bush Took Office, National Institutes Of Health (NIH) Funding For Autism-Related Research Has Increased By Over 80 Percent From \$56 Million FY 2001 To An Estimated \$101 Million In the FY 2007 Budget, Including Support For Autism Centers of Excellence.
- In addition, the Budget includes approximately \$15 million at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for autism surveillance and research, including five regional Centers of Excellence for Autism and Developmental Disabilities Research and Epidemiology. In October, CDC initiated to \$5.9 million study to help identify factors that may put children at risk for autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities.

The Combating Autism Act Enhances Research, Surveillance, And Education Regarding Autism Spectrum Disorder

The Act Authorizes Research Under NIH To Address The Entire Scope Of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Autism, sometimes called “classical autism,” is the most common condition in a group of developmental disorders known as the autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). Other ASDs include Asperger syndrome, Rett syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder, and pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (usually referred to as PDD-NOS).

The Act Authorizes Regional Centers Of Excellence For Autism Spectrum Disorder Research And Epidemiology. These Centers collect and analyze information on the number, incidence, correlates, and causes of ASD and other developmental disabilities. The Act also authorizes grants to States for collection, analysis, and dissemination of data related to autism.

The Act Authorizes Activities To Increase Public Awareness Of Autism, Improve The Ability Of Health Care Providers To Use Evidence-Based Interventions And Increase Early Screening For Autism. The Act authorizes the Secretary of Health and Human Services to:

- Provide information and education on ASD and other development disabilities to increase public awareness of developmental milestones;
- Promote research into the development and validation of reliable screening tools for ASD and other developmental disabilities and disseminate information regarding those screening tools;
- Promote early screening of individuals at higher risk for ASD and other developmental disabilities as early as practicable;
- Increase the number of individuals who are able to confirm or rule out a diagnosis of ASD and other developmental disabilities;
- Increase the number of individuals able to provide evidence-based interventions for individuals diagnosed with ASD or other developmental disabilities; and
- Promote the use of evidence-based interventions for individuals at higher risk for ASD and other developmental disabilities as early as practicable.

The Act Calls On The Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC) To Enhance Information Sharing. The IACC provides a forum to facilitate the efficient and effective exchange of information about autism activities, programs, policies, and research among the Federal government, several non-profit groups, and the public. The Combating Autism Act requires the IACC to provide information and recommendations on ASD-related programs, and to continue its work to develop and update annually a strategic plan for ASD research.