

Autism Definition

Autism is a lifelong, treatable developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life. Autism is four times more prevalent in boys than in girls. It occurs in all socio-economic groups.

Specifically, autism is a neurological disorder that interferes with the normal development of the brain. The areas of the brain affected are control verbal and nonverbal communication, social interaction and sensory development.

Children with autism often display inappropriate repetitive activities, have difficulty with changes in daily routines and display unusual behavioral responses to sensory experiences.

Autism is one of five disorders that fall under the umbrella of Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD):

- ◆ Autistic Disorder
- ◆ Asperger's Disorder
- ◆ Childhood Disintegrative Disorder (CDD)
- ◆ Rett's Disorder
- ◆ PDD-Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS)



Autism Prevalence

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL

1 in 110 individuals
have an autism spectrum disorder

Source: Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control December 2009

US DEPT OF EDUCATION

Based on statistics from the U.S. Department of Education and other governmental agencies, autism is growing at a startling rate of 10 - 17 percent per year.

AUTISM SOCIETY OF AMERICA

The Autism Society of America estimates that the prevalence of autism could reach 4 million Americans in the next decade.

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

2,378,081 Illinois School Children

318,461 Illinois Special Education Students

13,764 Students under Autism Category

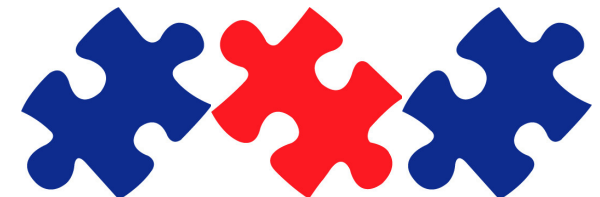
Over **700%** increase in 12 years

Financial, Family and Community Impact

According to the US Department of Education, educating a child with autism is estimated at over \$18,000 per year. This is 3 times the cost of educating a regular education student and more than a child with any other disability.

A recent US study by Michael Ganz, Assistant Professor at Harvard School of Public Health, found that it costs about \$3.2 million to care for a person with autism over his or her lifetime. Caring for all people with autism in the U.S. over their lifetimes costs an estimated \$35 billion per year. Illinois private schools for children with autism cost range from \$21,000 to \$180,000 per year (source: Harrisburg Project). Each child with autism who must be institutionalized would cost the state of Illinois between \$130,000 and \$320,000 PER YEAR (source: Auditor General's Examination FY 2004).

One should keep in mind that often the family of the child of autism assumes the bulk of the financial and emotional cost of care and education of the child. A 2003 National Survey of Children's Health found that parents of children with autism have higher stress than parents of children with other developmental disabilities. Families are often on the brink of financial ruin and experience one of the highest divorce rates.





The Illinois Autism Training & Technical Assistance Project

IATTAP is one of seven Illinois State Board of Education initiatives of the Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Center. Its mission, resources and current statewide services provide support, training and technical assistance to Illinois schools and families for children with autism spectrum disorders.

HISTORY

In 1997, the Illinois Autism Training and Technical Assistance Project (IATTAP) was founded. This Illinois State Board of Education initiative was a proactive effort to address an alarming increase in Illinois students with autism.

PROJECT GOALS

1. Build local capacity to establish and implement effective educational supports and programming for children with autism spectrum disorders.
2. Promote a proactive approach to working with individuals with autism spectrum disorders and their families.
3. Help children with autism spectrum disorders remain with their families in their home communities and become productive community members.
4. Increase the percentage of students on the autism spectrum who are educated in the general education classroom.
5. Increase the effective and meaningful involvement of parents in their children's education with ASD.

What We Do and What We Don't Do

Here is what we do:

- Online and DVD courses on Autism Spectrum
- Focus Family Support to families and their teams through IATTAP Teams across Illinois
- Experiential Practicum and coaching with school teams
- Disseminate information
- Maintain an active website with online library and resources
- Maintain 30 lending libraries throughout Illinois
- Provide family education and support resources and activities through Family Support Specialists, Parent Cafes and collaborative organizations
- Participate in national/state/local organizations

Activities that are outside our work scope include the following:

- IATTAP does not offer one time or emergency consultation
- We are not a direct service provider
- Staff do not conduct formal assessments, evaluations or testing, or provide diagnostic services
- We are not a lobbying organization
- We are not a funding agency
- IATTAP does not promote one intervention, method or a single approach

Regional Contacts

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The Illinois Autism Training & Technical Assistance Project

Member of NATTAP - Network of Autism Training and Technical Assistance Projects



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