

Advocacy & Impact Packet



The
connection
is you.™

What is Autism?

The Connection Is You™



Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is a complex, lifelong developmental condition that typically appears during early childhood and can impact a person's **social skills**, **communication**, **relationships**, and **self-regulation**. The Autism experience is different for everyone. It is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is often referred to as a "spectrum condition" that affects people differently and to varying degrees.

While there is currently no known single cause of Autism, early diagnosis helps a person receive resources that can support the choices and opportunities needed to live fully.



Relationships



Communication



Self-Regulation



Social Skills

Autism Signs & Characteristics

- Repetitive behaviors, movements, or phrases
- Lack of response to normal stimuli (i.e. his/her name, visual cues)
- Atypical verbal communication or non-speaking
- Difficulty understanding or expressing feelings
- Avoiding eye contact

Facts & Statistics

Over 7 million individuals in the United States are on the Autism spectrum; Autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability in the U.S.

1 in 36 children are diagnosed with Autism. Since 2000, the Autism prevalence rate has been consistently increasing from one in 150 to now one in 36.



38% of children with ASD have an intellectual disability, 24% are in the borderline range, and 39% have average to above-average IQ scores.

Over the next decade, an estimated **700k to 1.1 million+ Autistic teens** will enter adulthood and age out of school-based services.



Vaccines do not cause Autism.

Boys are 4x more likely than girls to be diagnosed with Autism.

The cost of caring for Autistic Americans is estimated to rise to \$460+ billion by 2025 in the absence of more-effective interventions and supports. An estimated \$175 to \$196 billion of these costs are for adult services.

Autism Society

101 The connection is you.™

Our mission is to create connections, empowering everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully.

Our vision is to create a world where everyone in the Autism community is connected to the support they need, when they need it.

Founded in 1965, the Autism Society is the nation's leading grassroots Autism organization representing people with Autism and their families.

Our network annually supports **over half a million people.**

35k people attended support groups across the country.

214k+ people attended affiliate events across the country. This support allows affiliates to connect with more members of the Autism community.



Our network fielded over 130k phone calls, emails and support inquiries.

Five core services: advocacy, education, information and referrals, support, and community.



Approximately 70 affiliates across 34 states.



1 million people visited the Autism Society of America website for information, resources, and community supports.



Almost 600 letters were sent to members of Congress to urge the FDA to take action to ban electric shock devices.

Get connected to the support you need, when you need it.

Everyone deserves to live fully. At the core of the Autism Society's work is our goal to influence meaningful change in support of the Autism community.

Support the Autism Society of America:

- Make a donation at AutismSociety.org/donate
- Planned giving, make the Autism Society a beneficiary in your will
- Host a peer-to-peer fundraiser
- Donate your insurance policy, a vehicle, or stock
- Contribute through your workplace giving option



Affiliate Network

The Autism Society relies upon the tremendous work and support of our nationwide affiliate network. Get connected to your local affiliate today.



Advocacy

The connection is you. Get involved today and make your voice heard with our public policy efforts.



Education

Access educational resources, referrals and supports to empower the Autism community to live fully.



Support

Contact the Autism Society's National Helpline to speak with a trained Information & Referral (I&R) Specialist.

State Advocacy Goals



Through our nationwide network of 70+ affiliates, the Autism Society engages with state and local government agencies, school systems, and local non-profits that provide direct services to the Autism community. The Autism Society supports affiliates to build capacity, develop coalitions, provide resources and training, and advocate for legislative goals and strategies that will ultimately help individuals with Autism and their families participate fully in their communities.

The information below outlines various state legislation efforts related to essential services and supports for the Autism community.

Safety

Goal: Promote and support legislation that empowers individuals with Autism as they navigate first responders and the criminal legal system.

- Create a missing alert for people with Autism and intellectual/developmental disabilities who wander. [KS HB 2531](#), [FL HB 937](#), [KY SB 45](#) & [MD HB 195](#).
- Require Autism training for police. [IL SB 3201](#) & [VA HB 1246](#).
- Allow for the consideration of mental condition and intellectual and developmental disabilities in criminal proceedings. [VA SB 1315](#) & [KY HB 385](#).

Access to Care in the Community

Goal: Expand access to care in the community through HCBS, caregiver credits, and housing and mental health supports.

- Support HCBS providers and caregivers. [NM HB 395](#), [NE LB 937 \(sec. 35\)](#), [IL SB 2026](#), [IL SB 3432](#), [KY HB 6 \(sec. 20\)](#), & [NV SB 511 \(sec. 74\)](#).
- Increase access to waivers. [MD HB 1149](#) & [VA 2024 budget bill](#).
- Expand efforts to address housing and mental health support access. [PA HB 849](#), [ME HP 639](#) & [IN SB 1](#).

Education

Goal: Ensure access to education by supporting students and educators, as well as providing a safe learning environment.

- Support students and their families during IEP meetings. [MD HB 336](#) & [MD HB 903](#).
- Prohibit the use of seclusion and limit the use of restraints. [IL HB 0219](#) & [Model bill toolkit](#).
- Recruit and retain educators. [KY HB 377](#), [NJ A 5416](#), [LA SB 205](#), & [KY SB 265](#).
- Ensure higher education is accessible and attainable. [IL SB 0099](#), [VA SB 21](#), [MN HF 4024 \(sec. 9\)](#), & [ME HP 1386](#).

Health Equity

Goal: Ensure access to medical support for the Autism community.

- Support medical professionals in their ability to treat patients with Autism and other developmental disabilities. [NY A 1665](#), [MA S 1398](#), [MA S 1401](#), [MA H 1252](#).
- Expand those who are qualified to administer vaccines. [OH SB 144](#), [KS SB 131](#) and [MI SB 219](#).

State Advocacy Impact




 **Approximately 70 affiliates across 34 states** working on coordinated policy initiatives.

 Constant communication with **30 affiliates in 15 states** monitoring state policy.

Shares policy updates with 66,000 people per month through a bi-weekly newsletter, Capitol Connection.

 **8 bills passed that Autism Society influenced** in Kansas, Illinois, Minnesota, Virginia, and Maryland.

 **Advocates utilize our Action Center to send thousands of letters to legislators** across the Country on important community issues.

State Advocacy Toolkit shared with ~71k people.

Monitored 100 state bills during the 2024 session.

50+ meetings with state legislators.

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