



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 31 children are diagnosed with Autism. Since 2000, the Autism prevalence rate has been consistently increasing from one in 150 to now one in 31.



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.

Autism is over **3x times more common among boys** than among girls.

The cost of caring for Autistic Americans is estimated to rise to \$461 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.™

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**.

107k people attended support groups across the country.

~70 affiliates across 34 states, District of Columbia and Puerto Rico



Our network fielded over 97k phone calls, emails and support inquiries.

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

 **Over 794k+ people visited the Autism Society of America website** for information, resources, and community supports.

397k people attended affiliate events across the country. This support allows affiliates to connect with more members of the Autism community.

 **2,700+ letters were sent to Congress/Senators** 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, vehicle, or stock
- Contribute through workplace giving options



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.

Access to Care in the Community

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

- Support HCBS providers and caregivers. [CT SB 1358](#), [NE LB 937 \(sec. 35\)](#), [IL HB 3089](#), [IL SB 3432](#), [KY HB 6 \(sec. 20\)](#), [KS HB 2310](#) & [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 LD 769](#), [IN SB 1](#), & [MS HB 807](#).
- Ensure non-speakers are treated with dignity and have equitable access. [NY A7363B](#).
- 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](#).

Education and Employment

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 and in the classroom. [MD HB 366](#), [MD HB 903](#), & [FL CS/HB 447](#).
- Prohibit the use of seclusion and limit the use of restraints. [IL HB 0219](#), [CO HB 1248](#) & [Model bill toolkit](#).
- Recruit, retain, and train educators. [KY HB 377](#), [NJ A5416](#), [LA SB 205](#), [VA SB 1293](#) & [KY SB 265](#).
- Ensure higher education is accessible and attainable. [CO SB 87](#), [IL SB 0099](#), [VA HB 1805](#), [MN HF 4024 \(sec. 9\)](#), & [ME LD 46](#).
- Promote employment. [OR SB 810](#), [IN HB 1559](#) & [MD HB 502](#).

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 2431](#), [FL HB 937](#), [KY SB 45](#), [MD HB 195](#), [IL SB 1548](#), & [FL HB 711](#).
- Require Autism training for police. [IL SB 3201](#), [VA HB 1246](#), [NV SB 308](#), & [SC H 3285](#).
- Allow for the consideration of mental condition and intellectual and developmental disabilities in criminal proceedings. [VA SB 1315](#), [MD HB 703](#) & [KY HB 385](#).

State Advocacy Impact



 **~70 affiliates across 34 states** coordinating on policy initiatives.



Constant communication with **30 affiliates in 10 states** monitoring state policy.

Shares policy updates with 60,000 people per month through a monthly newsletter, Capitol Connection.

 **Multiple bills passed that Autism Society influenced in** Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Virginia, Minnesota, Texas.

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



Autism Advocacy Days in multiple states including Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

75+ meetings with state legislators.

Monitored 100 state bills during the 2025 session.

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.

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.



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.



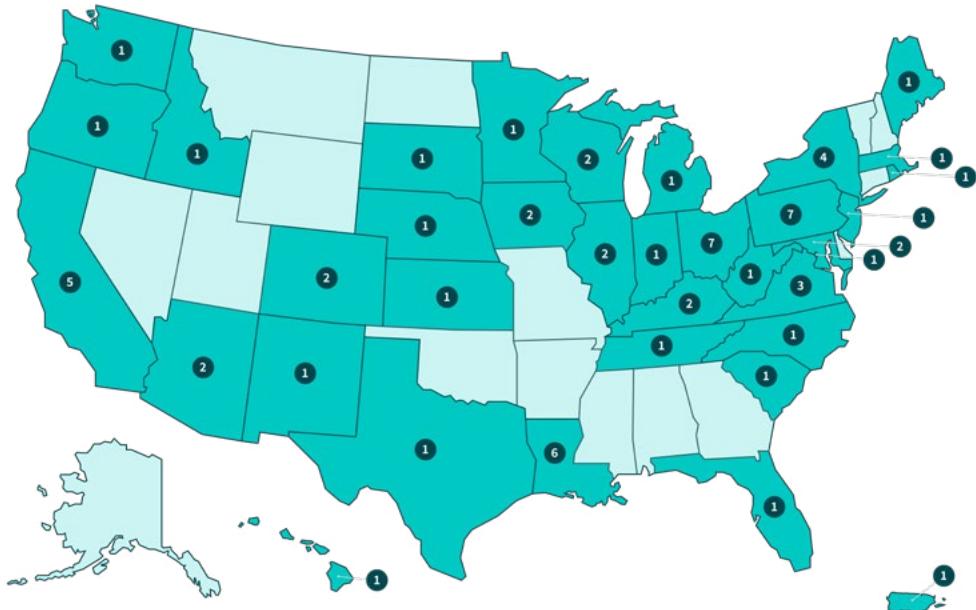
Support

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

The Network

Our Reach

- ~70 affiliates across 34 states, District of Columbia and Puerto Rico
- Affiliate network has 1,000+ employees and 750+ board members across the U.S.
- 397,508 people attended 9,600 events hosted nationwide
- 487,234 people served by affiliates



Arizona	Kansas	New Mexico	Puerto Rico
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Phoenix • Southern Arizona 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Heartland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Mexico 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puerto Rico
California	Kentucky	New York	Rhode Island
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inland Empire • Los Angeles • San Diego • San Francisco Bay Area • Ventura County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bluegrass • Kentuckiana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central New York • Greater Hudson Region • Nassau-Suffolk • Western New York 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhode Island
Colorado	Louisiana	North Carolina	South Carolina
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boulder County • Colorado 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acadiana • Bayou • Greater Baton Rouge • Greater New Orleans • Louisiana • North Louisiana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Carolina 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Carolina
District of Columbia	Maine	Ohio	South Dakota
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District of Columbia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Ohio • Dayton • Greater Akron • Greater Cleveland • Mahoning Valley • Northwest Ohio • Ohio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Hills
Florida	Maryland	Oregon	Tennessee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Florida 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baltimore-Chesapeake • Maryland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oregon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Tennessee
Hawaii	Massachusetts	Pennsylvania	Texas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hawaii 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massachusetts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berks County • Greater Harrisburg • Greater Philadelphia • Lehigh Valley • Northeastern Pennsylvania • Northwestern Pennsylvania • Westmoreland County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas
Idaho	Michigan	Washington	Virginia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idaho 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Detroit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washington 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Virginia • Northern Virginia • Tidewater
Illinois	Minnesota	West Virginia	Wisconsin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern Illinois • Greater Chicago 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minnesota 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Virginia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Wisconsin • South Central Wisconsin
Indiana	Nebraska		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indiana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nebraska 		
Iowa	New Jersey		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iowa • Quad Cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southwest New Jersey 		