



# Nevada Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders

January 8, 2024

## Board Members

**Korri Ward, Rural  
Representative  
(Chair)**

**Corey Nguyen,  
BCBA, (Co-Chair)**

**Anna Marie-Binder  
Representative of the  
Public at Large**

**Amy Walch, MEd  
Parent of a Child  
Over Age 12**

**Amy Coyne  
School District Rep  
(Clark County)**

**Linda Tran  
School District Rep  
(Washoe County)**

**Nicole Muhoberac  
Parent of a Child  
Under Age 5**

The Honorable Governor Lombardo  
101 N. Carson Street  
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Dear Honorable Governor Lombardo,

As chairperson of the Nevada Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders (CASD), I am honored to offer the following recommendations of the Commission and update you on the activities of the Commission as required by NRS 427A.8801.

The Commission's primary focus since July 2023 has been to develop the five-year Nevada Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders Strategic Plan. Since there is no funding provided for this endeavor, we are meeting virtually and dedicating most of our Commission meeting times to developing the Plan. We prioritized updates to the By-laws that reflect Senate Bill 411, effective July 1, 2023. We are updating surveys and questionnaires to collect data from people with lived experience, providers, and agencies across Nevada. We are updating the Plan to address current critical needs of Nevadans with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families.

## **CASD SUBCOMMITTEES**

The Funding and Insurance Subcommittee chaired by Anna Marie Binder has recruited additional volunteers and is ready to begin their bimonthly meetings. The subcommittee will make recommendations to the CASD to maximize public and private funding sources to support the full scope of services needed across the lifespan for all Nevadans with ASD and their families.

The Workforce Development Subcommittee chaired by Corey Nguyen has also recruited additional volunteers and will soon be meeting on a bi-monthly basis. The subcommittee will be researching and recommending strategies to expand the number and quality of professionals providing services to individuals with autism.

A third Subcommittee for Resource Development was established with a unanimous vote in August 2023. Nicole Muhoberac will chair this Subcommittee. We look forward to aligning the Subcommittees work with the ADSD Olmstead Plan, finalized November 17, 2023.



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## NEEDS OF PERSONS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

### Adults

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) has begun contracting with Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) to provide support and training to adults with autism. The CASD recognizes that Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is an effective strategy to teach job skills to adults. The CASD recommends that VR keeps disability specific long-term data to determine the impact/effectiveness of BCBAs providing training for their clients.

Providers of Home and Community Based Waiver Services are mandated to begin paying their direct care staff a minimum of \$16.00/hour beginning in January 2024. Medicaid began reimbursing providers at the recommended higher rate in July 2023, but some providers are waiting until the mandate to increase their direct care staff wage. The CASD commends the mandated wage and recognizes the mandated wage as an effective strategy to increase the workforce.

Adults with ASD over the age of 26 years old do not have access to ABA through Medicaid or to behavioral supports through the Regional Centers. The lack of access to treatment and behavioral support puts adults with a co-morbidity of ASD and intellectual and developmental delay (IDD), at increased risk for institutionalization. Many of these adults with a dual diagnosis are nonspeaking, exhibit severe behaviors, and require constant care.

The Regional Centers have a rate code for BCBAs, but the rate is significantly less than the rate for BCBA services billed through Medicaid. Furthermore, the Regional Center does not have a rate code allowing Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT) to provide services to adults with autism. The Commission recommends that Medicaid fund ABA for adults with ASD across their lifespan to reduce the risk of institutionalization and improve their quality of life. In addition, the Medicaid reimbursement rate for adults with ASD must be the same as the rate for children, because working with an adult with profound autism and severe behaviors requires specialized techniques and strategies to keep everyone safe. Additionally, the CASD recommends that the pathway to become a BCBA provider in Nevada become streamlined, with one application to become a provider for Medicaid, VR, ATAP, and Regional Center.

### Autism Treatment Assistance Program (ATAP)

ATAP provides service coordination and funding for autism treatment for children up to the age of 19 years old. The number provided by ATAP is not all inclusive of individuals in the state of Nevada living with autism that have or receive services. The average age of an active client is 8.7 years old. Between the fiscal year 2023 and 2024 ATAP caseload grew 3.13%. During this time the number of children on the waitlist grew 21%. ATAP has been building their pool of BCBAs and RBTs to treat children with autism. The CASD recommends that ATAP continues to build their pool of providers and shorten their wait time from processing to active, as we recognize that when a child begins ABA their quality of life improves, and this positively impacts their family and community.



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## Ages of Children Served by ATAP and the Number of Children on Waitlists

Active Children Age Cohort Breakdown	
<b>0-5:</b>	332 Children
<b>6-10</b>	421 Children
<b>11-15</b>	187 Children
<b>16-20</b>	77 Children

Table 1. Provided by ATAP, December 2023

Waiting Children Age Cohort Breakdown	
<b>0-5</b>	26 Children
<b>6-10</b>	2 Children
<b>11-15</b>	2 Children
<b>16-20</b>	2 Children

Table 2. Provided by ATAP, December 2023

## Current ATAP October 2023 Waitlist and Referral Breakdown

Monthly Caseload - October 2023	Number
<b>New applicants</b>	92
<b>Waitlist: children 0-5 y/o</b>	26
<b>Waitlist: children 6-10 y/o</b>	2
<b>Waitlist: children 11-15 y/o</b>	2
<b>Waitlist: children 16-20 y/o</b>	2
<b>Avg. Days waiting from referral to eligible</b>	54
<b>Days waiting from eligible to active</b>	12

Table 3. Provided by ATAP, December 2023

Age Cohorts of ATAP clients	Statewide as of October 2023
<b>Total</b>	1017
<b>0-5</b>	332
<b>6-10</b>	421
<b>11-15</b>	187
<b>16-20</b>	77

Table 4. Provided by ATAP, December 2023

## Nevada Early Intervention Services (NEIS)

IDEA Part C services are provided by Nevada Early Intervention Services (NEIS). NEIS provides service coordination and therapies for all families of children with a developmental delay or diagnosed condition between the ages of birth to 3 years of age. When services end at age 3 transitional support from Part C Services occurs. Nevada Early Intervention Services support the diagnostic process for families with concerns for autism and partners with ATAP for access to ABA therapy. Should a family select Part B services provided by Nevada Department of Education (NDE), NEIS service coordinators can attend an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting, but unfortunately, there are few options for service coordination if the child receives services from the Regional Center, Head Start, or a community organization, such as Nevada PEP. This can leave some families without the full knowledge of services and supports in their communities.

The CASD recommends that each family be made aware of all options prior to transitioning from IDEA Part C Services. These options would include introducing families to provide a warm hand off to Nevada PEP, ATAP, Regional Centers, and local ASD support groups prior to the



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transition. Ensuring seamless transitions is a demonstration of an agency promoting a child's optimal outcomes in hopes of a higher quality of life.

Fiscal Year	Number of Children Served with a Diagnosis of Autism	Total Children Served During FY	Percentage of Total Children Served	Average Age at Time of Diagnosis
FY23	655	6,868	10%	31
FY22	505	6,627	8%	31
FY21	360	6,452	6%	30
FY20	328	6,633	5%	30

Table 5. Provided by Nevada Early Intervention Services, 12.2023

## Nevada Department of Education (NDE)

According to the Nevada Department of Education, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B Child Count; as of October 2022, 10,977 students between the ages of 3-21 had a primary disability category of autism. The CASD supports increasing the workforce of special education teachers with an autism endorsement, BCBAs and RBTs to serve this large population of students with autism.

**Source:** [https://webapp-strapipaas-prod-nde-01.azurewebsites.net/uploads/October2022 Nevada IDEA Child Count b1e5e7da2a.pdf](https://webapp-strapipaas-prod-nde-01.azurewebsites.net/uploads/October2022%20Nevada%20IDEA%20Child%20Count%20b1e5e7da2a.pdf)

## Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD)

In November ADSD finalized their Olmstead Plan. The Commission concurs with the plan in that several of the goals promote ADSDs outreach across Nevada and promote workforce development within ADSD and the community. The data reported the need to create awareness of ADSD services and to build the workforce. There is also a need to ensure that ADSD services efficiently and effectively meet the community-based needs of adults with profound ASD and IDD. Statistically this group is about 26% of the ASD population. The CASD recommends ADSD to ensure that providing services to this vulnerable population is a viable business option for providers and one in which no gaps in care occur.

## Active Applied Behavior Analysis Providers in Nevada

Credential	December 2023
Licensed Behavior Analysts - D	44
Licensed Behavior Analysts	458
Licensed assistant Behavior Analysts	39
Registered Behavior Technicians	1822

Table 6. Sourced from Behavior Analyst Certification Board, December 2023



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## OUTCOMES FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SERVICES AND THEIR FAMILIES

Currently longitudinal data is not available to track outcomes of people with ASD receiving services. Within the ADSD Olmstead Plan, ADSD has set goals to track grievances, annually collect consumer satisfaction surveys, share data between agencies, and identify supports needed by ADSD recipients. The CASD recommends that the data collected be deidentified and be delineated by disability, and that co-occurring profound ASD and IDD are a separate category from ASD. This will help identify gaps in services to people with profound ASD and IDD, which is a minority within the ASD population.

With determination and gratitude,  
  
Korri Ward

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