



**Texas Council on Autism
and Pervasive Developmental Disorders**

**Senate Committee on Education
Interim Charge 1
80th Legislature**

Frank C. McCamant, Chair

August 18, 2008



Texas Council on Autism
and Pervasive Developmental Disorders

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 - early detection / early intervention - a good investment
 - consistent, quality services and supports for the school-age years
 - transition into a meaningful and productive adulthood experience
 - building infrastructure for statewide access and coordination



Council Background Information

- Texas Council was created in 1987
 - Chapter 114, Title 7 of the Human Resources Code
- The Council’s mission is to advise the governor and make recommendations to state agencies and the Legislature to ensure that the needs of persons of all ages with autism spectrum disorders and their families are addressed, and that all available resources are coordinated to meet those needs.
- Work products:
 - Annual Report to the executive commissioner, governor, lieutenant governor and speaker
 - State Plan



Council Background Information

- Autism is one of five disorders coming 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)
- The Council uses the terms “autism spectrum disorder” or “ASD” to refer to all five categories of PDD
- The core deficit areas for ASD typically are social communication, reciprocal social interactions, and restricted and repetitive pattern of behavior, interests and activities.



Council Background Information

- Council composition:
 - seven public members (gubernatorial appointees)
 - six ex-officio agency members representing:
 - Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS);
 - Department of State Health Services (DSHS);
 - Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC);
 - Texas Education Agency (TEA);
 - Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS); and
 - Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)



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Key Focus Areas

- Early detection / early intervention - a good investment
- Consistent, quality services and supports for the school-age years
- Transition into a meaningful and productive adulthood experience
- Building infrastructure for statewide access and coordination



Early Detection / Early Intervention

- From birth to 5 years, a child should reach milestones in how they play, learn, communicate and interact socially. A delay in any of these areas could be a sign of a developmental problem, including autism.
- The good news is, the earlier it's recognized the more we can do to help a child reach their full potential.
- *'Learn the Signs. Act Early.'* campaign by the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (under the CDC)
 - dissemination of these materials by Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) and other entities to help educate parents and professionals
- Early intervention services
 - early intervention can be a cost-effective approach
 - focused funding will reduce the lifetime cost of support services



- There is no single treatment protocol for all children with autism, but most individuals respond best to highly-structured behavioral programs.
- The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development lists behavioral therapy, including Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) among the recommended treatment methods for autism spectrum disorders.
- To help develop and provide the needed resource materials, TEA has implemented the Texas Initiative for Statewide Leadership in Autism:
 - providing a mechanism to access training, technical assistance, support, and resources for educators who serve students with autism.
 - will also provide useful information to parents, families, interested community members, and other professionals serving students with autism.
- The program will roll out this school year, taking two years to complete.



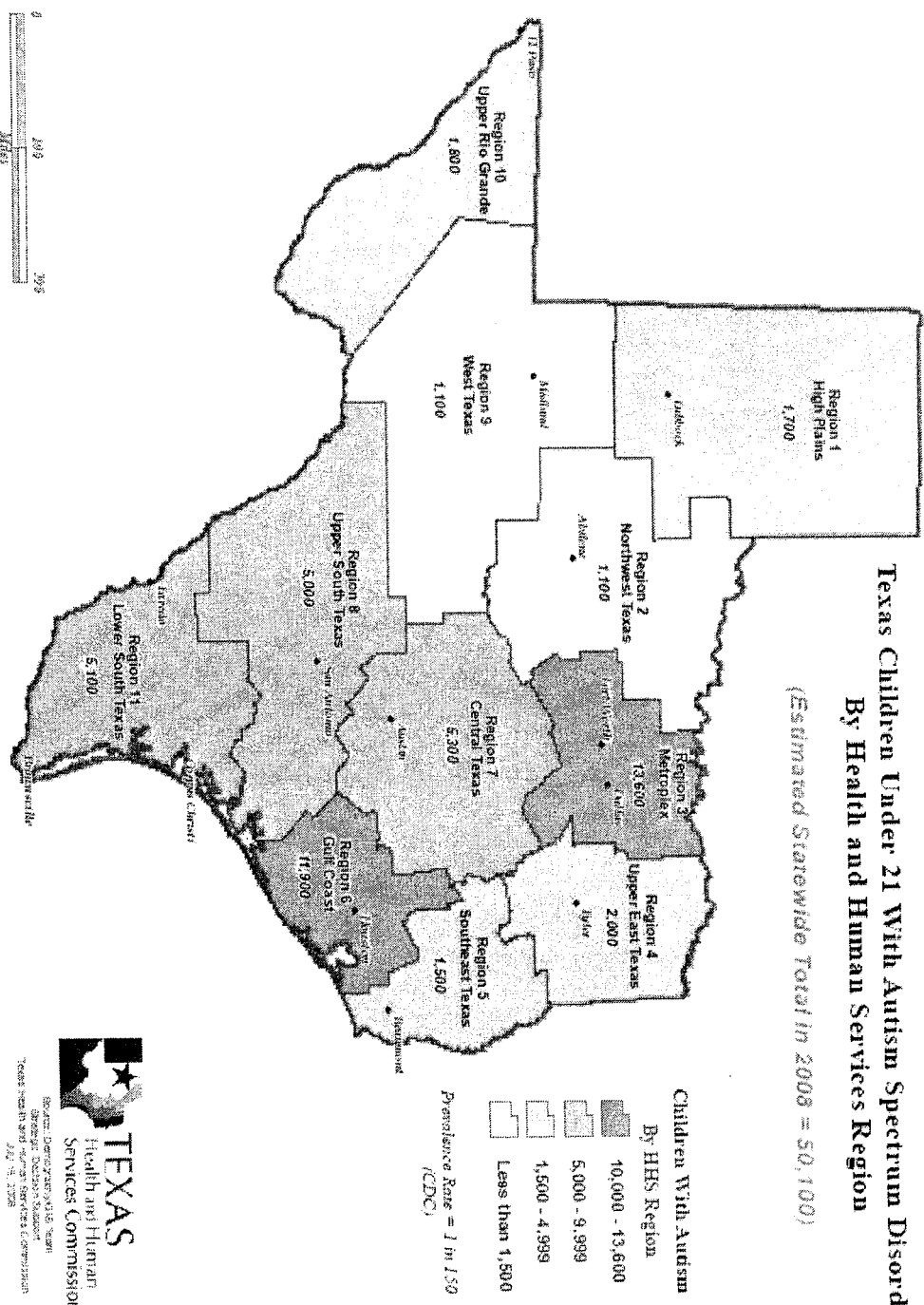
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School-Age Years

TEXAS

Texas Children Under 21 With Autism Spectrum Disorders
By Health and Human Services Region

(Estimated Statewide Total in 2008 = 50,100)



TEXAS Health and Human Services Commission
BOARD: DEMOCRATIC STATE SENATE
GOVERNOR: DOUGLAS A. STUBBS
TEXAS STATE HEALTH SERVICES COMMISSION
202 W. 12TH

August 18, 2008

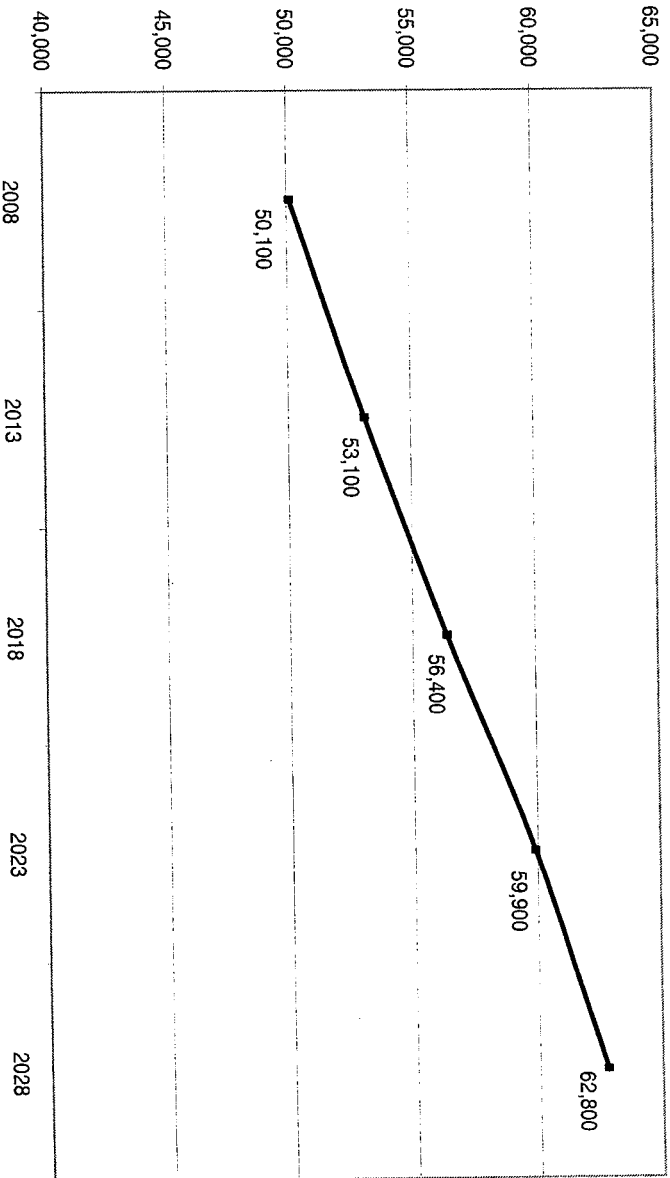
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School-Age Years

Texas Children Under Age 21 With Autism Spectrum Disorders



Source: Demography Team. Strategic Decision Support. Texas Health and Human Services Commission. July 2008.

Assumes CDC-cited prevalence rate of 1 in 150 among children under age 21.

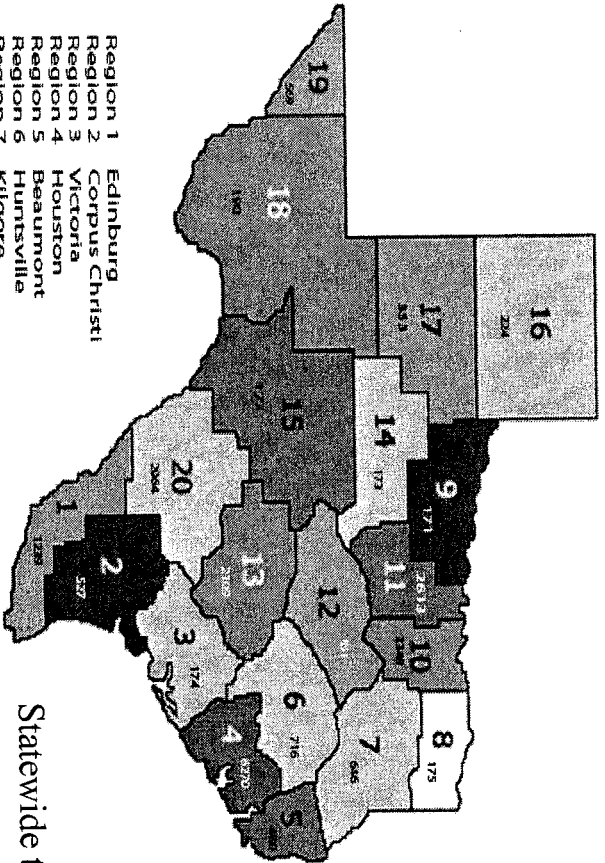


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School-Age Years

Texas Children Under 22 Carrying the Educational Diagnosis of Autism in 2007/2008

Data from the Texas Education Agency's Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS)





School-Age Years

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- The Council received public input from town hall meetings and formal hearings
 - Input and testimony from parents and family members, professionals, advocates, and persons with ASD
 - While many Independent School Districts (ISDs) are providing good supports and services, the majority of the concerns voiced to the Council were related to those ISDs with poor supports and services, and the lack of overall consistency across all the ISDs
 - The Council will continue to work on helping to facilitate the consistent application of resources and requirements across all 1000+ ISDs in Texas to provide quality supports and services to all Texas children with ASD



Transition to Adulthood

- With a growing population, Texas has a growing need to provide for successful transition into a meaningful and productive adulthood
- Texas is like most states where there is a void of necessary supports and services when a person with ASD enters adulthood
- The Council will be evaluating best practices in adult services across the nation in order to recommend a pilot project proposal
- An adult services pilot project would begin to implement additional, or new, services in order to provide feedback on how to successfully coordinate and expand these services as needed across the state



Building Infrastructure

- Though a number of effective services and funding options for individuals with ASD exist, they tend to be scattered, fragmented, and often difficult to access
- The Council is exploring the concept of establishing an autism research and resource center to provide a central point of information and resources:
 - education and training of professionals
 - current, reliable information on evidence-based therapies
 - improve consumer’s knowledge of and access to resources
 - potential collaboration with TEA on the Statewide Autism Initiative materials
 - help foster an inclusive multi-university environment in which autism research is coordinated among and supported by all Texas universities.
 - outreach and community education
- DADS is funding a feasibility study on the resource center concept which will be completed by later this year.



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Next Steps

- Annual Report will be delivered by November 1
- Reformulating our Advisory Task Force
- Preparing for a long-term, strategic planning process which will result in an updated State Plan in 2009