

## Proposed and Enacted Autism Legislation

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### Issue

Provide proposed and enacted legislation in Connecticut affecting individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) for the past 10 years.

### Summary

Over the last 10 years, the General Assembly enacted a number of laws specifically affecting individuals with ASD, such as expanding health insurance coverage and reporting requirements for suspected abuse or neglect. This report briefly summarizes these acts, as well as fully drafted bills that were voted out of committee but not passed into law.

Please note that this report includes proposed and enacted legislation determined to be relevant, but may not be exhaustive. For instance, a public act or bill that would apply to all students receiving special education services may not have been included if it did not specifically mention students with ASD. Budget and revenue bills that were not enacted have also been excluded.

For example, the report does not include acts or bills on (1) truancy interventions for students with disabilities ([PA 18-182](#) §§ 3-4); (2) the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) account program ([PA 16-65](#) § 72 and [PA 17-124](#)); and (3) an incentive pilot program for nonprofit human services providers ([PA 19-127](#)).

# Enacted Legislation Affecting Individuals with ASD

Table 1 below briefly describes relevant public or special acts by year. Table 2 similarly describes proposed bills that were favorably reported (thereby receiving a bill analysis). Please note that repeat bills that did not pass in one or more years but eventually were enacted in substantially the same form are only included as the public act in Table 1.

**Table 1: Public Acts Affecting Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, 2010-2019**

<i>Public or Special Act Number (Topic)</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>More Information</i>
<b>2019</b>		
<a href="#">PA 19-49</a> (transition services for children with autism)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires the first individualized education program (IEP) for a child who is at least 14 years old and diagnosed with ASD to include (1) appropriate measureable postsecondary goals and (2) transition services</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 19-147</a> (training for public safety and emergency services personnel)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes various changes related to the training of public safety personnel, including requiring the UConn Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities to develop a communication aid for use by certain first responders, including mental health crisis intervention services personnel</li> <li>The communication aid must describe techniques for serving and interacting with juveniles and adults with ASD, nonverbal learning disorder, and cognitive impairment</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 19-161</a> § 39 (driver document envelopes, law enforcement guidance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to design and provide to people with ASD blue envelopes that (1) hold their driving documents and (2) provide written guidance for law enforcement on interacting with people with ASD</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<b>2018</b>		
<a href="#">PA 18-10</a> §§ 7 & 8 (ASD screening coverage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires health insurance policies to cover preventive services for people age 21 or younger, including autism screening, in accordance with specified guidelines</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 18-15</a> § 11 (duty of school counselors to report abuse or neglect)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adds school counselors to the list of professionals who must report to the Department of Social Services (DSS) commissioner the suspected abuse or neglect of any person who receives services from DSS's Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 18-23</a> (ASD council)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes the Autism Spectrum Disorder Council permanent</li> <li>Under prior law, the council would have terminated on June 30, 2018</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 18-96</a> (mandated reporter timeframe)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduces, from 72 to 48 hours, the amount of time a mandated reporter has to report suspected abuse or neglect of a person (1) with an intellectual disability or (2) served by DSS's Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>

**Table 1 (continued)**

<i>Public or Special Act Number (Topic)</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>More Information</i>
<b>2017</b>		
<a href="#">PA 17-2</a> , June Special Session §§ 30-31, 86-99, 187-199 & 731 (Tobacco Health and Trust Fund (THTF) transfers, behavioral analyst licensure, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) as successor to the Office of Protection and Advocacy (OPA))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfers \$750,000 in each of FY 18 and FY 19 from the THTF to DSS to implement recommendations from a study on enhancements and improvements to supports and services for individuals with autism and their families</li> <li>• Requires behavior analysts to be licensed by Department of Public Health and establishes licensure requirements</li> <li>• Transfers to DDS OPA's investigatory responsibilities for alleged abuse or neglect of individuals (1) with intellectual disability or (2) who receive funding or services under DSS's Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services. (Under prior law, these responsibilities were transferred to the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS). In practice, DDS had been performing them since March 2017 under a memorandum of understanding with DORS)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 17-9</a> (minor changes to DDS statutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replaces the Council on Developmental Services member who has ASD with a relative or guardian of a person with an intellectual disability</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 17-96</a> (abuse or neglect investigations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specifies that DDS may investigate reports of abuse or neglect of adults aged 18 to 60 with ASD receiving services from DSS's Division of ASD Services</li> <li>• Requires DDS to provide DSS with an evaluation report of these investigations</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 17-166</a> (police training)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires training for state and local police to include techniques for handling incidents, such as wandering, that involve juveniles with ASD or nonverbal learning disorder</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<b>2016</b>		
<a href="#">PA 16-3</a> , May Special Session §§ 47-60 & 63 (ASD services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes DSS rather than DDS the lead agency for coordinating state agency functions responsible for ASD services and applying for associated federal funding</li> <li>• DDS retains authority to license community living arrangements and companion homes for individuals with ASD</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 16-4</a> , May Special Session §§ 9 & 227 (bonds for supportive housing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfers, from DDS to the Department of Housing, a \$20 million bond authorization for grants to private nonprofits for supportive housing for individuals with intellectual disability, ASD, or both</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 16-66</a> §§ 47-50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminates OPA and the Board of Advocacy and Protection for Persons with Disabilities, effective July 1, 2017</li> <li>• Establishes a nonprofit entity (Disability Rights Connecticut, Inc.) to serve as the state's protection and advocacy system and client assistance program for people with disabilities.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>

**Table 1 (continued)**

<i>Public or Special Act Number (Topic)</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>More Information</i>
<b>2015</b>		
<a href="#">PA 15-5</a> , June Special Session §§ 347-353 (behavioral health and ASD services, DDS commissioner's designated ASD services and interventions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expands certain health insurance policies' required coverage of ASD services and treatment, including behavioral therapy coverage requirements for people with ASD</li> <li>Eliminates maximum coverage limits on the Birth-To-Three program</li> <li>Requires the DDS commissioner, in consultation with the Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council, to designate services and interventions that demonstrate empirical effectiveness for treating ASD</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 15-209</a> (transitional services for youth and young adults with ASD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires the State Board of Education to draft a bill of rights for parents of children receiving special education services to be provided by local boards at planning and placement team meetings, along with information on transition resources and services for high school students</li> <li>Requires DDS to report annually to the Public Health Committee on its Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services and Autism Disorder Advisory Council</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 15-244</a> § 39 (THTF allocation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transfers \$750,000 in both FY 16 and FY 17 to implement recommendations from a study of support services for individuals with ASD and their families</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<b>2014</b>		
<a href="#">PA 14-143</a> (councils' membership)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases, from 13 to 15, the membership of the Council on Developmental Services (one new member must be a person with ASD who is a current or past recipient of services from the Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services)</li> <li>Increases, from 23 to 24, the membership of the Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council to include a physician who treats or diagnoses individuals with ASD</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 14-165</a> (mandatory reporting and abuse investigations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grants specific authority to DDS to investigate reports of abuse or neglect of individuals ages 18 to 60 with ASD receiving services from DDS's Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services made against a DDS employee or DDS-licensed or -funded agency</li> <li>Requires certain people to report to OPA suspected abuse or neglect of a person receiving division services or funding, and makes related changes</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 14-231</a> §§ 38 & 66 (behavior analysts' special education services and residential facility revolving loan program)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specifies that a certified behavior analyst or assistant behavior analyst may provide special education services to a child with ASD without a speech pathologist license</li> <li>Allows DDS to enter a memorandum of understanding with the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) to administer DDS' residential facility revolving loan program. Under the program, DDS makes loans to private nonprofit organizations for purchasing, building, and renovating community-based facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities or autism spectrum disorder</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>

**Table 1 (continued)**

<i>Public or Special Act Number (Topic)</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>More Information</i>
<b>2013</b>		
<a href="#">PA 13-20</a> (advisory council)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates an Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council, as a successor to an independent council established in connection with a previous pilot program, to advise the DDS commissioner on autism issues</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 13-84</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires health insurance policies to at least maintain current levels of benefits for insureds who were diagnosed with ASD before the fifth edition of the DSM was released (Was later amended by <a href="#">PA 15-5</a>, June Special Session)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 13-184</a> (THTF allocation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocates \$500,000 in FY 14 and \$750,000 in FY 15 from the THTF to implement the recommendations of DDS study of issues related to the needs of people with autism to enhance and improve the services and supports for these individuals and their families</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 13-187</a> (PANDAS and PANS advisory council)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishes an advisory council on pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorder associated with streptococcal infections (PANDAS) and pediatric acute neuropsychiatric syndrome (PANS) (the council was eliminated in 2017 by <a href="#">PA 17-146</a>)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<b>2012</b>		
<a href="#">SA 12-9</a> (study of model pre-employment training and employment programs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires the Office of Workforce Competitiveness, in collaboration with the Board of Regents for Higher Education and the State Department of Education, to study model programs about pre-employment training and employment of young adults with autism spectrum disorder and report findings to the Higher Education Committee by January 1, 2013</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Special Act Text</a>
<b>2011</b>		
<a href="#">PA 11-4</a> (update to terminology)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updates terminology used by DDS in its provision of autism services, including using the term “autism spectrum disorder” instead of just “autism”</li> <li>Allows, rather than requires, DDS to annually make recommendations to the governor and Public Health Committee about legislation and funding needed to provide necessary services to persons diagnosed with ASD</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 11-16</a> (update to terminology)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updates terminology used by DDS and OPA in their provision of services, including using the term “autism spectrum disorder” instead of just “autism”</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>
<a href="#">PA 11-44</a> §§ 147 & 148 (birth-to-three services coverage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes changes to the requirements health insurance policies that provide coverage for medically necessary early intervention (birth-to-three services) provided as part of an individualized family service plan, including increasing the annual maximum benefit that group health insurers must provide for children with autism spectrum disorders who receive birth-to-three services</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>

**Table 1 (continued)**

<i>Public or Special Act Number (Topic)</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>More Information</i>
<b>2010</b>		
<a href="#">PA 10-175</a> (applied behavior analysis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires school districts to use only behavior analysts licensed or certified in accordance with state standards to provide applied behavior analysis for students with ASD who require the services (1) according to a special education IEP or (2) under an educational plan established for a child with a disability that requires a reasonable accommodation but who is not eligible for special education.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Public Act Summary</a>

## Other Favorably Reported Bills

Table 2 below describes ASD-related bills that were favorably reported (thereby receiving a bill analysis) by year. Please note that repeat bills that did not pass in one or more years but eventually were enacted in substantially the same form are only included as the public act in Table 1 above.

**Table 2: Other Favorably Reported Bills Affecting Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, 2010-2019**

<i>Bill Number (Topic)</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>More Information</i>
<b>2017</b>		
<a href="#">SB 788</a> § 32 (bonds for supportive housing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authorizes \$10 million in new state bonds for FY 19 for grants to private nonprofits for supportive housing for individuals with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, or both</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Bill Analysis</a>
<b>2015</b>		
<a href="#">HB 6490</a> (pilot program for individuals diagnosed with ASD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires the DDS commissioner, in consultation with the Department of Children and Families commissioner, to create a pilot program for individuals with ASD who require a high level of clinical services and are on DDS's emergency list</li> <li>The pilot provides participants with behavioral management services, training in developing coping skills, on-site clinical oversight, and other individualized services</li> </ul>	<a href="#">File Copy</a>
<b>2011</b>		
<a href="#">SB 978</a> (coverage expansion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expands coverage for autism services disorder treatment to out-of-state certificate holders</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Bill Analysis</a>

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