Autism Spectrum Disorder in Georgia

Autism and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are used interchangeably to describe a group of complex disorders of brain development that impact how people communicate, interact, and behave.\(^1\) Behaviors associated with ASD can be evident in children prior to two years old, however most signs and symptoms begin to appear between 2-3 years old.\(^2\)

**DIAGNOSIS OF ASD\(^3\)**

The most recent edition of the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) is the primary tool for diagnosis of ASD. In order for a child to be diagnosed with ASD, the DSM-5 requires that they demonstrate a combination of:

**Persistent deficits in social communications and interactions:**
- Social-emotional reciprocity
- Nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction
- Developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships

**Restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviors, interests, and activities:**
- Repetitive motor movements, use of objects, or speech
- Insistence on sameness; inflexible adherence to routines
- Highly restricted, abnormally intense, and fixated interests
- Hyper- or hyporeactivity to sensory input; unusual interest in sensory aspect of environment

**PREVALENCE OF ASD IN GEORGIA**

91,914 children in Georgia, ages 3-17, are diagnosed with autism\(^4\)

**Factors related to apparent increase in prevalence:**\(^5\)
- Improved diagnosis criteria
- Environmental influences, such as parental age at conception, prematurity, and birth weight
- Increased awareness and earlier screenings

**BEHAVIOR ANALYSTS IN GEORGIA\(^6\)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CERTIFICATION</th>
<th>STATEWIDE COUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral (BCBA)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s/Graduate (BCBA)</td>
<td>679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s (BCaBA)</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>782</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BCBA:** Board Certified Behavior Analyst
**BCaBA:** Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst

Sources available here: [https://tinyurl.com/AutisminGA](https://tinyurl.com/AutisminGA)
Sources for Autism Spectrum Disorder in Georgia

2 Ibid