

# NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

## **Needs Assessment: Nonverbal Autism**

Isabella Garrish, Sara Thadani, Molly Martin, Madison Butler

Department of Health Promotion & Behavior, University of Georgia

HPRB 3700: Community Health

Dr. Katie Hein

11/26/24

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

<i>Scenario .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Health Section .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Treatments .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Risk Factors .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Prevalence .....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Culture Section .....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Religion and Culture .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Acculturation and Disability in Vietnamese Americans .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Social Acceptance Perspectives: .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Economic Perceptions and Socioeconomic Barriers .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>What is Needed? .....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Asset Map .....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Education .....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Access Resources .....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Medical .....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Support Resources .....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Sustainability.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>American Disability Act .....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Universal Health Care .....</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Requirement of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in Public Schools .....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Workplace Policies .....</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Individual Reflections.....</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Isabella.....</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Sara .....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Molly.....</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Madison .....</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>References .....</i>	<i>42</i>

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

### ***Scenario***

Jacob is a 3-year-old boy with a severe developmental disability (Autism - Nonverbal). His mom is a single mother who works full time at a local grocery. Her family is in Vietnam and thus not nearby to help. Examine what is available and what is needed for them and others who are in this type of situation.

### ***Health Section***

Nonverbal autism is a specific type of autism spectrum disorder, which is characterized as a disability caused by differences in the way that the brain develops (*"About autism spectrum disorder,"* 2024). In the United States, approximately 1 out of 59 children are diagnosed with ASD (Gengoux et al., 2019), and around 40% of those diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder are nonverbal or minimally verbal (Kuschner et al., 2021). With this condition, certain functions can be impacted such as social interaction, executive functioning skills, and information processing, which can vary in severity (Zapparrata et al., 2023). Signs of autism can be seen in children as early as during the first year of life, and many are diagnosed before the age of three (Gengoux et al., 2019). While autism spectrum disorder is a chronic condition, actions like early intervention, treatments, and therapies can be effective in managing or improving symptoms (*"Autism fact sheet,"* 2023). Signs of autism include difficulties with communicating, resisting changes to routine, social interactions, making or maintaining relationships, repetition in movements or speech, hyper focusing, behaving in a way that could bring harm to themselves or others, and being sensitive to certain stimulations (*"About autism spectrum disorder,"* 2024). For babies under nine months old, these can include limited to no smiling, eye contact, facial expressions, and audible responses to sounds or others. Toddlers that are one to two years old

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

show signs of autism with little or no babbling, interactive gestures, reaction to their name, or speaking of at least two words (*“Autism symptoms,”* 2024).

### *Treatments*

Treatments for children or adults with autism spectrum disorder widely vary and are usually chosen based on their specific needs, symptoms, and any co-occurring medical conditions. In regard to nonverbal autism, symptoms can be reduced or improved through treatments such as speech-language therapy, social skills training, early intervention, and parent-mediated social communication therapy (*“What are the treatments for autism?,”* 2021). All these types of therapies are available in Athens, Georgia— both in-home and in-office. Because children with autism spectrum disorders have a higher prevalence of comorbid medical conditions than the general population, they might also need physical or pharmacological treatments (Al-Beltagi, 2021). There are numerous types of conditions that can co-occur with autism, but those that are most seen include gastrointestinal issues, epilepsy, mental disorders, and conditions that affect eating or sleeping (*“About autism spectrum disorder,”* 2024). Having comorbidity can exacerbate symptoms of autism or cause behavioral issues, and because they are so common for individuals with autism, it is important for physicians to rule them out before making plans for interventions (Al-Beltagi, 2021). Children might also need physical or mental treatment for a co-occurring condition in addition to autism-related therapy or interventions, which can cause financial stress for parents and families.

### *Risk Factors*

A range of risk factors contribute to the development of autism, including genetic, environmental, and parental influences (National Autism Association, 2023). Genetically, mutations such as fragile X syndrome and Rett syndrome, along with a family history of autism, heighten the risk. Environmental influences include prenatal exposure to air pollution, harmful

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

chemicals, alcohol, and tobacco, as well as factors like low birth weight or premature birth. Parental influences, such as maternal age, multiple pregnancies, or closely spaced pregnancies, also play a role in increasing the risk of ASD. Although there is no cure for ASD, there are several interventions that may reduce the severity. Some of these interventions include speech and language therapy and occupational therapy, both assisting children with communication and daily life skills. Another intervention that is useful for some cases is medication. Medication can usually assist if the child is dealing with hyperactivity and severe behavioral problems (CDC, n.d.-a).

### *Prevalence*

In terms of prevalence in the United States, ASD is identified in approximately 1 in 36 children in the United States, with boys being four times more likely to be diagnosed than girls (CDC, n.d.). In the state of Georgia, 1 in 54 children are diagnosed with ASD, and it is far more prevalent in white children than that of black, Hispanic, and Asian or Pacific Islander (CDC, 2023).

For this assessment, Clarke County in Athens, Georgia must be considered. The Vietnamese population in Athens-Clarke County is 0.2% of the total population (Georgia Vietnamese Population Percentage, n.d.). It is also crucial for this case to consider the prevalence of autism spectrum disorder among the Vietnamese population. Although there hasn't been much research on the prevalence of autism in the Vietnamese population in the United States, there have been studies that found 1 in 132 children in Vietnam have ASD (Vui et al., 2021). There are several resources in the Clark County area that are beneficial in supporting children and adults with autism spectrum disorder. Some of these resources include therapy centers, support groups, learning disabilities centers, and non-profit organizations. Additionally, the Clarke County school system offers special education resources like assistive technology, IEPs, and Feeder

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

patterns (*Clarke County School District*, n.d.). These schools also offer special education scholarships for students with disabilities.

### ***Culture Section***

#### *Background*

In the United States, 1 in 36 children have autism. The prevalence of autism has increased from 6.7 in 2000 to 27.6 in 2020 (CDC, 2020). This increase may be due to increased cultural awareness surrounding ASD in recent years. Efforts to promote social acceptance of those with autism have made a drastic improvement in the way non-autistic people view their peers with ASD (UT Dallas, 2021). However, this is not the case in many other countries and cultures. Because most research on autism is focused on Western countries, ASD in east Asian populations is viewed in a different light. How parents view their children's autism diagnosis affects the rate at which they implement treatments and therapies. The Illness Perception Questionnaire-Revised is used to identify parent's perceptions on their children's ASD diagnosis. These studies are done in Western, higher income populations like the United States and Canada, and offer little generalizations to populations that lie outside of these characteristics. Because Vietnam is a lower, middle-income country with Asian cultural values, parents' perceptions on autism differ widely from those who adopt western cultural values (Truong et al., 2023). Religious beliefs, cost of treatment, and past understandings are among the main cultural barriers to acceptance of autism in Vietnamese populations.

#### *Autism in Vietnam*

Distribution of resources (higher income vs lower middle income), along with cultural stigmas drastically influence the rate of treatment and social acceptance of children with ASD. Vietnam is a country with a collective culture and emerging autism understanding, as it was

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

officially recognized as a disability by the government in 2019 which gave rise to some government funded treatment programs for families with autistic children, however limited other resources have been allocated to assist those with ASD (Van Tran et al., 2020). The overall prevalence of autism in Vietnam is like that of other lower- middle income countries, but Vietnamese populations tend to lag in overall acceptance and understanding of ASD (Ying et al., 2012). Furthermore, overlapping of spaces for disabled and non-disabled people allows for exposure and interaction with those with disabilities which can help societal perceptions of those with disabilities, along with necessary social integration for the individual with disability (Dieu, 2018). These common spaces are not prevalent in Vietnam, leading to further stratification among those who are disabled and their peers.

### *Religion and Culture*

In Vietnamese culture, Confucianism and Buddhism are foundational perceptions on politics, education, and daily life. These philosophes impact cultural viewpoints on children with ASD and feelings of shame within families of children with autism. The notation of karma plays a major role in the understanding of autism. The teachings that engagement in good behaviors in past lives will result in a happier rebirth, and that committing wrongdoings in the past will be punished in their next life. This surrounds autism with a negative connotation of a “punishment” of past actions, which increases feelings of guilt or responsibility within a family. These beliefs further reinforce prejudice and stigma towards people with disabilities (Ha et al., 2014). There are also strong feelings of honor and reward within family structures in Vietnamese cultures, in which Autism can be seen as a failure to uphold a family’s reputation. This further contributes to cultural perceptions of those with autism and their families (Truong et al., 2023). These understandings delay responding to diagnosis and seeking treatment or early intervention techniques. Among Asian religious beliefs, these feelings can create barriers to care and

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

acceptance of those living with autism in Vietnamese families and communities. The negative connotations surrounding autism from a religious perspective reinforce the belief that autism is the family's responsibility alone, which impacts the availability of resources, and the willingness to seek out necessary support. While autism is becoming increasingly understood in Vietnam, cultural and religious barriers still pose a level of misunderstanding surrounding the general acceptance of disabilities.

### *Previous Misconceptions*

In the early 1980s, ASD was falsely associated with an early form of schizophrenia. While these connections were officially discarded, the association of ASD with schizophrenia is still strong in Vietnamese populations (Ha et al., 2014). The negative connotations surrounding schizophrenia and autism are among some of the main reasons why parents delay seeking treatment for their children after their diagnosis. This misunderstanding is further reinforced by limited understanding of ASD among providers. It is upheld that if children with ASD are not given proper early intervention, the case would become severe. If they are not treated by age 18, they may be hospitalized because of their behaviors (Ha et al., 2014). These past misconceptions further contribute to the lag in understanding of autism in Vietnamese populations.

### *Acculturation and Disability in Vietnamese Americans*

In Vietnam, necessary resources for treatment and acceptance of autism may be limited, but how do viewpoints of autism change in Vietnamese Americans? This depends on the level of acculturation families experience when they immigrate to the United States. Acculturation is the degree to which members of an ethnic group participate in their dominant society's cultural traditions, values, and practices (Hsu, 2013). Families with higher degrees of acculturation to American ideologies tend to have more positive attitudes towards individuals with disabilities



## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

(Huer et al., 2001). The religious ideas of karma and debt are not practiced in day-to-day life. These families also tend to express low levels of discomfort surrounding the idea of disability and individuals with disabilities. This can be attributed to the overall protection and accessibility of resources for those with disabilities in the United States in comparison to Vietnam. Since Jacob's mother is a Vietnamese immigrant, she may have lower levels of acculturation so the impact of religion and Asian cultural values would play a bigger role in Jacob's diagnosis and treatment.

### ***Social Acceptance Perspectives:***

From a social acceptance perspective, nonverbal Autism can have many negative impacts on a child. In the scenario, Jacob's mother is his primary support system. However, she is overwhelmed and busy as a single mother who works full time. Therefore, Jacob lacks a full-time support system to address his needs and care for him. Having non-verbal Autism may affect Jacob socially through developing friendships with his peers. In Vietnamese culture, they emphasize the importance of being community driven and uplifting each other (Visit Vietnam Guide, 2023). However, in Jacob's situation, there is a lack of social connection to his family as they live in Vietnam. Seeking social interactions for Jacob can help him become more involved within his community and develop friendships. Having friendships and strong support systems can lower risk of depression and social isolation (American Psychological Association, 2023). As the mother works full time and her family is in Vietnam, she is most likely stressed and dealing with it all alone. Also, there might be struggles in finding a school for Jacob to provide him with the resources he needs to learn.

### ***Economic Perceptions and Socioeconomic Barriers***

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

Social determinants affect Jacob's situation financially through multiple factors. As his mother is single-income and works full-time, their family faces difficulties in a financial sense. It is estimated that it costs around \$234,000 for the upbringing of the child until 18 years old (Sussex Publishers, n.d). The cost for raising a child with a disability would likely be higher due to therapy funds. Families that are classified as having low socioeconomic status in the United States have an individual income of less than \$12,880 or household income of \$26,500. (OASH, 2021). This accounts for about 11.5% of the US population, or 38.9 million people living at or below the poverty line (Shrider, E.; Creamer, J. 2023). About 10% of Asian Americans overall live in poverty, and nearly 6 in 10 of this percent are immigrants (Ruiz, Z. T. 2021). Furthermore, 26% of people living with a disability in the United States are living in poverty (Elflein, J. 2024). Social determinants such as income and access to healthcare treatment or insurance may impact Jacob. Poverty is considered a major factor under the social determinant of health and influences the way Americans treat their health conditions. Unmet social needs, environmental factors, and barriers to healthcare access are among the reasons that low-income households experience worse health outcomes (OASH, 2021). Accessing medications and therapies may also be an issue which could prohibit his mental development. Especially with non-verbal autism, therapies to try to work on speech development will be costly. Without insurance, therapies such as Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Speech and Language Therapy can cost anywhere from \$240 to \$600 per day, or over \$4,800 per month. The high cost of these therapies makes it difficult for families of low income to access (Moller, R. 2024). However, in the United States governmental programs such as Medicaid help with healthcare access for those living in poverty. With Medicaid, autism therapies are covered if the individual is under the age of 21 (Georgia Medicaid, 2021). This makes treatment options more accessible for families who live under the poverty line.

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

Also, another important economic factor and socioeconomic barrier for Jacob and his mother is access to nutritious foods. In 2023, around 114.6 million individuals faced difficulties in accessing foods (USDA ERS, 2024). Studies depicted that lack of education and disability status can be correlated with facing lack of food security (USDA ERS, 2024). In 2023, about 12.8% of the population in Georgia faces food insecurity (USDA ERS, 2024). Thus, the utilization of food stamps would help reduce rates of food insecurity and poverty in United States. Regarding poverty, food stamps would help create less of a financial burden on grocery bills for low-income families. Many individuals do not have access to nutritious foods, including Jacob and his mother. As Jacob's mother works full-time, she is most likely busy and does not have much time to prepare meals. Therefore, qualifying for food stamps through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) would create many benefits for Jacob's family.

### ***What is Needed?***

In this scenario, Jacob and his mother both need access to a variety of resources that can help provide them with financial assistance, community support, healthcare services, therapy, as well as the services needed for Jacob's autism diagnosis. By using these resources available to them in Athens, Georgia, Jacob and his mother will be more able to afford basic life necessities, necessary care and treatments, specialized education for Jacob, and feel a sense of belonging within their community. Once their needs are identified, resources can be found that are able to help fulfill their needs and improve their overall quality of life.

### ***Living Expenses***

Jacob's mother needs financial support to help her pay for rent, groceries, and necessities in life. This would create less of a burden for her and allow her to spend less time working and more time taking care of Jacob. Along with this, high costs of living have been shown to leave more people impoverished, which can have a serious negative impact on the health of a

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

population due to how it affects people's mental health and wellbeing ("*The cost of living,*" 2022). This issue can be more difficult for people, like Jacob's mother, that have a child with a disability because they also have to worry about being able to afford care for their child in addition to meeting their basic needs. In a study conducted in the United States, 49% of Americans claim that the lack of affordable housing is a serious obstacle within their community (Schaeffer, 2022). Rent is one of the primary expenses' individuals must pay so affordable housing can help Jacob and his mother spend money on other necessities.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) has helped 3.4 million individuals overcome poverty (Mykta, 2024). The utilization of SNAP can help Jacob, and his mother save money on groceries and use money for other important necessities. In the United States, food insecurity impacts millions of individuals and SNAP has helped decrease food insecurity by 30% (CBPP, 2018). Also, the use of food stamps has alleviated stress levels and created better health outcomes in low-income families (Boone and Bhatti, 2017). Jacob and his mother need access to nutritious foods to prevent the development of diseases and require additional medical expenses.

Financial assistance through federal or state funded programs can help Jacob, and his mother afford groceries, clothing, and shelter while also decreasing their risk of poverty. This can allow Jacob's mother to focus on Jacob and finding treatments for him without an extra stressor, which can improve the wellbeing of them both.

### *Healthcare Insurance and Services*

Jacob needs health insurance to lower the expensive costs of Jacob's medical treatment and bills. This can help Jacob afford prescriptions and therapy sessions which can help him manage the difficulties associated with his condition (GoodRx, 2024). Over half of Americans receive their health insurance through their jobs, but these benefits usually come along with full time employment conditions (US Census, 2022). Because Jacob's mother must also take care of

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

Jacob, full time employment status may be difficult to achieve, which can pose a barrier to health insurance coverage through her employer. The next highest cohort of Americans receive their health insurance through public programs funded by the government, like Medicaid and Medicare. As Jacob's family experiences low socioeconomic status, they most likely qualify for Medicaid. In Georgia, families who earn under 100% of the federal poverty line qualify for these services (GA Medicaid, 2021). Additionally, Jacob himself may qualify for PeachCare for Kids, which is Georgia government's children's health insurance program. Since he comes from a low-income family and has a disability, he is likely qualified for these services. Access to both programs may be difficult to navigate, along with eligibility determination. Assistance may be needed to sign Jacob and his family up for Medicare and PeachCare for kids. Healthcare.gov is another resource that may assist Jacob's mother in finding an insurance program that is most beneficial for both herself, and Jacob.

### *Therapy*

Jacob would benefit from therapy treatments such as speech-language therapy, applied behavior analysis (ABA), or other behavioral approaches (CDC, 2024). The therapy sessions can help Jacob manage his condition and possibly prevent his condition from worsening. ABA therapy is the most common type of therapy for children with nonverbal autism as it focuses on a wide range of interventions that can alleviate a multitude of symptoms (MNT, 2021). This type of therapy is also tailored to each individual, which provides a unique approach to improving symptoms on a case-to-case basis (ASF, 2021). Other common therapies include speech therapy, occupational therapy, and social skills training. Speech therapy for individuals with Autism can teach individuals many skills. Aside from developing speech skills, other skills such as maintaining eye contact, observing body language, and adjusting language to match the audience

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

will be developed (NeuroLaunch Editorial, 2024). Jacob will benefit from these skills, and it can improve his overall interaction with others in society.

### *Education*

He also needs to be enrolled in a school which has the ability and the resources to teach individuals with special needs. In Georgia, individualized education plans are required in public schools, which provides an affordable educational resource for Jacob. Additionally, this means public schools are equipped with certain types of teachers who are skilled in working with nonverbal autism along with other disabilities. These programs are individualized to each child and are aimed at setting up children with disabilities for educational success, and beyond (Parent to Parent, 2019). Furthermore, Head Start programs provide early intervention programs for children of low-income families who have some level of disability. These programs can provide learning and social support opportunities for these children that can set them up for success in their primary education careers (DECAL, 2024). Enrollment in both Head Start and IEP programs may be difficult for families to navigate, so assistance is necessary to help Jacob, and his mother, apply and be enrolled in these low- to- no cost educational interventions.

### *Child Care*

Jacob will need childcare with a skilled caretaker who knows how to care for individuals with nonverbal autism and address Jacob's needs when his mother is at work. Childcare in the United States is becoming increasingly expensive for families of low socioeconomic status. The average family in Georgia pays around \$650 per month for childcare services (Winnie, 2024). This may be unaffordable for Jacob and his family. However, during the weekdays school may be a viable option for care during the day, as well as after school, school sanctioned childcare programs until Jacob's mother is off work. But, if she needs to work on the weekends, affordable competent childcare services must be allocated for Jacob. State subsidies such as CAPS as well

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

as Head Start programs may help to deter these expenses (Willie, 2024). Lower childcare costs will reduce the financial burden on Jacob and his mother, resulting in spending money on other basic needs.

### *Support*

Jacob and his mother will need support from their friends, family, neighbors, and the community. Navigating through a diagnosis can be extremely difficult and overwhelming for Jacob and his mother. Therefore, support groups or social interventions are needed in this situation. Jacob can find social support systems through support groups via online or in-person, therapy sessions, friends, and family members. Social support interventions can alleviate feelings of isolation and improve mood and overall behavior (ShineLight, 2020). Support groups can help him interact with other individuals who also have non-verbal autism and learn more about the condition (ShineLight, 2020). A study measured the effectiveness of implementing support groups for individuals with Autism. The findings depicted that the implementation of support groups created improvements in social communication, motivation, cognition, and awareness (Gajre et al., 2024). These improvements can improve the quality of life for Jacob and his mother (Gajre et al., 2024). There are many benefits of support groups, and Jacob's mother, especially as a single-income parent, is experiencing feelings of stress. Therefore, the community could help Jacob's mother by cooking meals for their family or setting up playdates for their children and Jacob. This would give Jacob's mother a small sense of relief to have some sort of help navigating through this difficult time.

### *Access*

Transportation is also an issue that impacts Jacob and his mother. It is important for them to have access to buses that run through Athens, Georgia in order to get to work or school, Jacob's therapy sessions, other treatment appointments, grocery stores, and anywhere else that is

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

necessary. The Athens-Clarke County Transit will be helpful in allowing them to get to certain places at no cost. Studies have shown that using public transit is associated with increased physical activity levels and is a low-cost way to improve public health outcomes (Sener et al., 2016). In addition to having a positive health impact, Jacob's mother will not have to worry about purchasing a car, buying gas, and paying for car insurance, which will lower their monthly costs. Along with this, they have free access to the Athens-Clarke County public library, which has Wi-Fi, computers, books, and other resources that they can use. For example, if Jacob's mother needs to fill out and send any online applications for financial assistance, she can do so at the library instead of paying for a computer and Wi-Fi at home.

### ***Asset Map***

#### *Education*

In Athens-Clarke County, there are numerous education programs available for children with special needs. Since Jacob's family is located within county borders, he is eligible for these services. Many of which are offered through the Clarke-County School District in junction with the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and Facilitated IEP. This section highlights three programs available for children of low-income families with special needs in the local area; CCSD/child find, Babies Can't Wait, and Head Start.

Babies Can't Wait (BCW) is Georgia's early childhood intervention program funded through the state's Department of Public Health. BCW offers a variety of services for infants and toddlers with special needs. As Jacob is three years old, Babies Can't Wait would provide him with many benefits. This program aims to provide early identification and screening of children with developmental delays and chronic health conditions, which Jacob's family could use for a form of diagnosis. After identification, early intervention programs intend to improve developmental potential of children with developmental conditions and provide support for



## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

families/caregivers of these children. Jacob having support will help lessen feelings of isolation and increase mood. Eligibility is determined by diagnosis of a physical and/or mental condition that is known to result in developmental delay. Furthermore, this diagnosis must be confirmed by a qualified team of professionals. This service is provided from birth to age three, with the final intervention program referring children to special education programs in public schools. Because this program is offered through Georgia's Department of Public Health, these services are provided to anyone, regardless of income. To apply for services, the Georgia DPH website provides an early intervention coordinator locator to assist in finding a BCW program. First, Jacob's family must complete a Children 1<sup>st</sup> Screening and Referral Form, which is located on the GaDPH website. This form must be submitted to the local BCW office. After the age of three, there is a transition phase out of BCW and into other intervention programs. BCW will arrange meetings to discuss possible services available. Once Jacob turns four years old, he can enter the Clarke County School District and continue his education there.

Clarke County School District has a special education department that offers a variety of programs that can be individualized to each child's needs. Depending on where Jacob's family lives, he could attend several different elementary schools, all of which offer special educational programs. These programs are funded through the government and do not require additional payment. To get Jacob enrolled in the special education program, a referral is needed. This referral can come from Babies Can't Wait (BCW), his parents, or his early regular childhood provider. The referral must consist of his parent's written consent to conduct an evaluation. After requesting an individualized education program (IEP), his parents and school will meet to discuss the reasons as to why they feel an evaluation is necessary. After this meeting, the CCSD will determine if an evaluation is necessary, and if so, will take place within 60 days of the initial request. When the evaluation is complete, another meeting will take place where the results are

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

discussed. His parents and regular childhood provider will participate in the eligibility determination meeting, and the CCSD will implement an IEP immediately following classification.

Head Start is another program offered through the Georgia Department of Public Health for children of low-income families with special needs. This program is offered from birth to age five and is a free early learning and developmental service program offered at no cost to qualifying families. Jacob would be able to access Head Start as he is three years old. This program would help him navigate his learning style and develop foundational skills. Each provider has a different application process, and application does not guarantee admittance into a program. Along with an application, 2 documents proving address, proof of income (for eligibility determination), Jacob's birth certificate, his mother's photo ID, and a copy of Jacob's social security card. The application and supporting documents can be turned in online. If these requirements cannot be submitted online, the applicant is able to contact a staff member listed on the website. CCSD offers a variety of resources online connected to this program for further information.

Child Find is the program offered through the CCSD to refer elementary through high school aged children to IEP programs. Once Jacob turns six, Child Find screenings can offer his family a service that can assist in identifying potential special needs, which can then be used to find educational services and opportunities for early intervention programs. These screenings can be set up by either Jacob's childcare provider or his physician with his parent's consent. His parents can also initiate a referral at any time. Qualifying landmarks include difficulty expressing themselves and being understood by peers, difficulty understanding language, repetitive behavior, difficulty interacting with others, excessive inappropriate behaviors, and delay in sitting, walking, crawling, talking. Jacob will qualify for this when he is six years old and

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

continues experiencing delays in talking and effectively expressing himself. For school children aged 6-21, the school CCSD administrator will set up a Response to Intervention (RTI) team to review individual cases of students. If the RTI suspects Jacob may have a disability, they can refer him with his parent's permission. As mentioned above, this process can be requested by his parents if Jacob was involved in BCW/Head Start. Referrals must be accompanied by documentation of previous behavioral interventions that prove an insufficient rate of progress. When Jacob enters the CCSD, he will be provided with research-based interventions recommended by the private school RTI team. This team will collect and monitor data concerning their intervention and will modify as needed. This intervention usually includes an IEP in school, which is free of cost.

### *Access Resources*

Since Jacob's family are low-income immigrants, access to resources may be a barrier to care. Especially for healthcare resources, driving may be required, or internet access to submit forms, etc. In Athens- Clarke County, there are numerous resources implemented to increase access to those who may not have reliable Wi-Fi or transportation.

ACC transit is a resource that is free to use as a form of reliable transportation. Especially since the county is large and expensive, sidewalks may not be an option to access some resources. Currently, fares for the buses are free and can be used by anyone. There are currently 30 different routes available, many of which stop by Piedmont and St. Mary's hospitals, along with the medical industrial parks on prince avenue, where many of Jacob's therapy and medical services are located. The buses run Monday-Friday from 6 am to 9:45 pm, and on weekends from 7 am to 6:45 pm. Since many jobs end at 5 pm, the buses allow time for Jacob's mother to schedule appointments for Jacob after work and be able to use the bus system. Furthermore, this is helpful for Jacob's family if their main mode of transportation is unreliable, the vast routes and

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

long hours should be able to alleviate any stress of transportation to necessary resources. There is also an app that shows where the bus is and an estimated time of arrival to the stop of choice.

The ACC public library is open to all on weekdays from 9 am to 9 pm. They have numerous events for children that may be beneficial for Jacob's condition. They also have free Wi-Fi that can be used without time and/or session limits. If Jacob's family does not have access to reliable internet connection, filling out online forms for other interventions may be difficult. The library is a good resource for this issue. The library also has public computers with internet access, these can be used without a library card as well. Library cards are free to all residents of Georgia and those who are in school, which includes Jacob's family since they are living in Georgia. Applying for a library card can be done in person, where his mother will be required to present some form of identification and address verification.

### *Medical*

In Athens Clarke County, there are plenty of medical services to help low-income families and children with special needs. Since Jacob's family is low-income and faces financial difficulties, they will struggle accessing medical care and resources. Therefore, healthcare resources such as Medicaid and CHIP will help alleviate the cost of medical bills for Jacob's mother.

Medical costs can become expensive, therefore having insurance can cover major portions of the cost and provide financial relief. There are two government-based insurance programs known as Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Individuals qualify for Medicaid if their income is lower than 133% of the poverty threshold and if they have a child or a disability etc. Medicaid has expanded to allow all individuals to qualify for it if their income is below the poverty threshold. However, it was up to each state to decide if they wanted Medicaid to expand in their state and Georgia denied the expansion of Medicaid. Since Georgia

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

denied the expansion of Medicaid, Jacob's mother is still below the poverty threshold, but she does not meet Georgia's medicaid eligibility requirements. She makes slightly higher but still qualifies for Medicaid due to her child having a disability. For individuals with Autism, Medicaid generally covers services such as preventative care and therapy sessions (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2024). Preventative care services would help prevent Jacob's prognosis from worsening and therapy services would be beneficial in seeking social support.

CHIP also offers health insurance to low-income children younger than 19 years old and individuals with Medicaid plans can utilize a CHIP plan as well (Medicaid.gov, 2024b). Jacob would be able to use CHIP until he reaches age 19 and this would lower the financial tolls for Jacob's mother. CHIP services can slightly differ from Medicaid as they focus on helping children whose family's income may be higher than Medicaid is able to cover (Medicaid.gov, 2024b). CHIP is not free of charge and has required fees such as premiums, copayments, etc. (GoodRx, 2024). However, it does cover a significant portion of the medical bills. CHIP covers services such as dental and physical visits, immunizations, and mental health treatment (GoodRx, 2024). These services will be useful to Jacob to check on his health and wellness related to physical conditions.

To investigate being covered by Medicaid and CHIP, it would be necessary to reach out to a Georgia State Medicaid Agency (Medicaid.gov, 2024a). The agency worker will help the individual figure out if they are eligible for Medicaid and CHIP coverage and assist in the application process (Medicaid.gov, 2024a). They will also help in explaining the different types of services Medicaid and CHIP cover (Medicaid.gov, 2024a). The application can be done online. After the CHIP and Medicaid application has been accepted, the agency can assist in helping the individual figure out which healthcare provider nearby accepts Medicaid insurance (Medicaid.gov, 2024a). The cost of Medicaid is different per state but an average cost of

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

Medicaid in Georgia is \$2,829 per month per person (Medicaid Planning Assistance, 2024). With Medicaid and CHIP, there are a few required documents such as birth certificate, social security number, proof of identity (POI), pay stubs, etc (Georgia.gov, 2024).

Regarding the context of Jacob's situation, medical resources will be necessary. Firstly, medical insurance such as CHIP and/or Medicaid will be extremely beneficial for Jacob. Medicaid and CHIP can cover prescription drugs, different types of therapies and treatments for Autism, screening and diagnosing services, and more (GoodRx, 2024). Therefore, having Medicaid and/or CHIP would give Jacob more access to these medical services. Jacob will benefit from these resources as it will improve his quality of care and his outcome. Furthermore, the price of healthcare treatments would decrease significantly, and it would help Jacob's mother save more money for other necessities such as rent, grocery bills, school bills, etc. Jacob and his mother will experience many benefits from Medicaid and CHIP, thus emphasizing the necessity of health insurance for this case scenario.

### *Governmental Resources*

Since Jacob and his mother are low-income, Jacob will need access to governmental resources such as food stamps and affordable housing. Groceries and rent are two major expenses in families' bills, so resources to cover these expenses will be discussed.

An important governmental resource devised to reduce poverty rates in the United States is food stamps. The utilization of food stamps would create less of a financial burden on grocery bills for low-income families. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides benefits based on household income (USDA, 2024). To be a part of SNAP, individuals must reach out to a state agency worker who will provide the instructions along with the application process (USDA, 2024). There is no cost required to apply to SNAP. It will usually take around 30 days after applying to find out if the individual is eligible to use SNAP (USDA, 2024). SNAP

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

has an income eligibility income based on the number of people living in the household (USDA, 2024). With income eligibility limits, a household of two such as Jacob and his mother must make \$1,704 monthly to qualify for SNAP (USDA, 2024). With SNAP benefits, if there are 2 individuals living together, they will receive \$536 in benefits according to the eligibility chart (USDA, 2024). Documents such as proof of identification, medical bills, and proof of income must be shown to state agency workers to determine eligibility (*How to apply for food stamps*, 2024). Jacob and his mother could spend this money at the local grocery stores, farmers markets, etc. There is no direct address to SNAP; however, calling the hotline number will help individuals get in touch with a state agency worker. Using SNAP could allocate spending more money towards other basic needs such as therapy treatment for Jacob and support groups for Jacob and his mother. Jacob and his mother would save a significant amount of money on groceries using SNAP and intake more nutritious foods, promoting health and wellness. Jacob's mother will also face lower levels of stress and pressure as she will not have to worry as much about affording groceries. Using SNAP will improve her mood and overall quality of life.

Using SNAP could allocate spending more money towards other basic needs such as therapy treatment for Jacob and support groups for Jacob and his mother. Jacob and his mother would save a significant amount of money on groceries using SNAP and intake more nutritious foods, promoting health and wellness. Jacob's mother will also face lower levels of stress and pressure as she will not have to worry as much about affording groceries. Using SNAP will improve her mood and overall quality of life.

The Athens Land Trust is a federally funded program that offers affordable housing to low-income individuals and families. To be eligible for this program, the household income must be lower than 80% of the area's median income– which varies based on the number of people within the household. For a 2-person household in Athens, the maximum annual income for

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

homeownership eligibility is \$57,300. In addition to this, prospective homeowners need a credit score of 640 or higher. Jacob's mother would qualify for the program based on income; however, her credit score would need to be determined and considered. According to their website, there is currently a waitlist for homes being sold while more are being built. There is also a limited number of rental units available at this time. It is important for Jacob's mother to begin the inquiry and application process in order to get on the list soon and avoid a longer wait. First, she will need to attend a free information session, which will be held on Zoom or in-person at their office. Once it is determined that she is eligible, they can connect her with a lender if needed to complete the process so that she can be placed on the waitlist. Overall, Athens Land Trust is a great resource that gives low-income families the chance to own or rent a home at an affordable price.

The Athens Housing Authority is another resource that offers affordable housing to individuals or families in Athens, Georgia that are classified as having low to moderate incomes. Their ACT I Homes program requires that a household income be a maximum of 60% to 80% of the population's median income to qualify for homeownership. According to the chart provided on the website, a 2-person household would need an annual income of \$44,050 or less to qualify. Additionally, applicants must have a minimum credit score of 600, must be able to make a \$1,000 down payment, are financially qualified to obtain a mortgage, will attend a professional housing counseling, will complete a homeownership workshop, is a first-time home buyer, and does not own vacant land. While this can be a useful resource, there are more requirements for eligibility as well as a lower annual income needed to qualify. This could make it more difficult for Jacob's mother to get a home through this program compared to the Athens Land Trust program. However, if she were to be eligible, it would be a good alternative option since there is a waitlist for the other program.



## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

### *Therapy Resources*

Finding the right kind of therapy for children with autism spectrum disorder can be important and beneficial for the severity of symptoms. Because Jacob was diagnosed with nonverbal autism, his specific treatment and type of therapy should be selected based on his symptoms and needs. There are many resources for various types of therapy which largely include in-person sessions in the Athens-Clarke County area, as well as therapy websites that make scheduling online or in-home appointments easy. Although in-person meetings are usually more effective for patients, virtual sessions can still be helpful. Since Jacob's mother does not own a vehicle and solely relies on public transportation, having sessions in their own home or online could be a good alternative if they ever face issues with transportation.

Hopebridge Autism Therapy Center in Athens would be a great resource for Jacob and his mother since it provides therapy and support for both children with autism spectrum disorder and their legal guardians. Although Jacob has already been diagnosed, they provide diagnostic assessments for young children if their guardians suspect that they might have autism, which can be done either in-center or in-home. Hopebridge also offers therapy and services that are child and family centered through an integrative therapy that they call their "360 care model." With this, they aim to find out what goals each family or child wants to achieve and then create a custom-tailored plan that includes finding the most effective combination of therapy practices for every child. These types of therapies include applied behavioral analysis therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, and feeding and swallowing therapy. This would be helpful for Jacob because they offer numerous types of therapy and can provide him with the specific kind that works best for treating his symptoms. In addition to this, the center offers resources that his mother can use including family training, insurance support, physician referrals

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

for Jacob, and various autism resources that can help her learn more about his condition and needs.

Hopebridge Autism Therapy Center has a care and benefits department that focuses on helping families with the financial aspects. They accept Medicaid, CHIP, and commercial health insurance; however, since plans vary in what type of therapy is covered, the care and benefits team can assist with finding out therapy options based on coverage. On their website, they also provide information on state-specific insurance coverage for autism therapy. Aetna, Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS), CareSource Medicaid, Cigna / Evernorth BH, Georgia Medicaid, Humana, Kaiser Permanente, Peach State Health Plan Medicaid, and United Healthcare (UHC) are all accepted insurance payers at Hopebridge. Jacob will likely qualify for either Medicaid or CHIP, which is accepted; however, his treatment plan may be dependent on what is covered by his insurance.

The Treetop ABA Therapy provides in-home therapy for children with autism in the Athens-Clarke County area. If Jacob's mother decides that it would be difficult to travel to in-person sessions on a regular basis then this would be a great resource for Jacob. Their services include functional assessments, ABA therapy, parent and family training, school-based support, social skills groups, and behavioral interventions. Jacob's mother can inquire about obtaining their services by reaching out via phone or email based on the contact information given on the website. Jacob and his mom can first meet with a team member at their home during an intake consultation to discuss his needs. Following this, a team member can determine Jacob's eligibility for services based on the insurance information and application. Once he is accepted, a licensed Board-Certified Behavior Analyst can meet with the him at their home and perform an assessment to create a treatment plan.

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

Similar to Hopebridge Center, BlueSprig consists of a team of board-certified behavior analysts and registered behavior technicians that provide applied behavior analysis therapy services for children with autism spectrum disorder. This center offers individualized treatment plans including early intervention, intervention for adolescents, and specialty services depending on a child's needs. This could also be a good option for Jacob since he is only three years old and may need early intervention therapy. While services available depend on each person's insurance policy, BlueSprig can help parents navigate the terms of their policy or answer any other insurance-related questions. According to their website, BlueSprig accepts the following insurance carriers: Aetna, Anthem, BayCare, Beacon, BlueCross BlueShield, Cigna, CMS, ComPsych, First Health, Gulf Coast, Humana, Kaiser Permanente, LifeStance, Magellan, Medicaid, New Directions, Premera, United Healthcare, and Volusia. If Jacob and his mom are able to obtain Medicaid, he would be able to receive treatment from this center.

Butterfly Dreams Farm offers hippotherapy and therapeutic riding for children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorder, like Jacob. This non-profit organization has a speech pathologist, two PATH-certified therapeutic riding instructors, and many volunteers that work with patients. Sessions take place at the farm and usually last for 30 minutes. Volunteers and workers first help patients on a horse, slowly walk them into a fenced-in arena, and begin working on tasks that are suited to treat a child's symptoms. These two types of therapy—hippotherapy and therapeutic riding—have been shown to improve speech, motor skills, coordination, balance, physical strength, range of motion, sensory processing, cognition, swallowing and more. With Jacob's diagnosis of nonverbal autism, this type of therapy could help improve his social skills and speech. During sessions, Jacob's mom can sit outside of the arena and observe while sessions take place. To inquire about their services, Jacob's mom can reach out through email or phone to discuss his condition, plan of treatment, and schedule a

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

session. She can also talk with an employee to find out about costs, if their insurance is accepted, or if he can receive a sponsorship that will cover the cost. Butterfly Dreams Farm accepts donations for horse sponsorships, rider sponsorships, and general operating costs.

The Center for Autism and Behavioral Education Research consists of faculty members with backgrounds in various disciplines that collaborate to help individuals with autism spectrum disorder in a clinical setting. Team members use their knowledge in behavioral sciences to assist patients in improving skills, behaviors, and/or academically. The UGA applied behavior analysis (ABA) clinic provides different services including skill acquisition, behavior reduction, parent training, school consultations, and augmentative and alternative communication options for families to use at home. This could be a helpful resource for both Jacob and his mother. However, a full assessment costs around \$1,200 and the center does not accept insurance. Their website does mention that they operate on a sliding scale for autism assessments, which means that Jacob's mother can speak with them and their evaluation of his case could lower the cost. Although attending their clinic on a regular basis might be too costly, Jacob's mother could decide to have an assessment done. This can provide his mom, doctors, and other therapists with information and measurements related to his symptoms and functioning that would be helpful for treatment plans going forward.

### *Support Resources*

For families raising a child with autism spectrum disorder, access to support resources is crucial for the child's development and the rest of the family's well-being. When focusing on Jacob and his mother specifically, there are a variety of organizations and programs designed to assist families in navigating their challenges associated with special needs. These resources are virtual and in-person and provide financial assistance, educational tools, and support that could benefit Jacob and his mother.

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

Parent to Parent of Georgia offers a Special Needs Database, which is available online free of charge. This resource includes information on local support groups, financial aid programs, activities for children, and healthcare providers that specialize in working with individuals with special needs. This website can be used by individuals by selecting their county on the site's filters. This website is open to all Georgia residents and does not require any fees or applications. Parent to Parent of Georgia's Special needs Database can provide support for Jacob and his mother by addressing several areas. First, Jacob's mother could find parent support groups that offer emotional support and shared experiences, which would reduce her sense of isolation. This database could also connect her to grants, scholarships, and financial aid programs that would cover the cost of therapy for Jacob. Also, connecting Jacob with activities and healthcare providers in the area will assure Jacob receives tailored care. There are some drawbacks to this resource, which include lack of respite care and flexible work solutions. This database offers many beneficial resources for Jacob and his mother but does not provide Jacob's mother with options to be able to alleviate the stress of balancing a demanding work schedule and the ability to be with Jacob at appointments and support groups.

The Autism Foundation provides a range of resources aimed at supporting people with autism and their families. This resource includes links to online educational tools and advocacy tips. The foundation offers an online portal where users can access educational materials and access services in their areas by searching through categories such as family support, education, and healthcare. Families can use this website without any fees or costs. This resource could empower Jacob's mother to better understand autism, nonverbal communication strategies, and management tips, which would inevitably allow her to provide more effective care to Jacob. The Autism Foundation also provides tips that can help Jacob's mother understand the intervention programs, education services, and workplace accommodations, and this can reduce the stress of

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

managing Jacob's disability, while also balancing her demanding work schedule. And since the platform is cost free, it is accessible despite Jacob's mother's financial limitations. One huge limitation to this resource is the fact that everything is online, and while that is valuable, it may not fully replace in person resources.

Autism Speaks provides financial assistance options for families with children with autism that are in need of assistance for therapy, medical services, and support. Eligible families can explore the funds that are aimed at assisting with high costs of care associated with autism care. Families can complete the application on the Autism Speaks website where they will provide proof of diagnosis, income, and how much money they need for care. Some grants have specific eligibility criteria that users may or may not qualify for. Autism Speaks offers scholarships and grants that can help to cover the cost of speech therapy, occupational therapy, or applied behavior analysis, which are essential for Jacob's development but are known to be very expensive. The application also is very accessible, and the proof of diagnosis and income ensures that scholarships go to those who are most in need. The biggest limitation to this resource is that scholarships and grants take time to process, which could delay immediate access to care for Jacob.

ESP is a program located in Watkinsville, GA that offers activities tailored to people with disabilities, including recreational activities, family support, and summer camps. Volunteers and interns work with children, teens, and adults with disabilities to provide inclusive activities and build relationships. ESP offers after-school programs and annual events. To join, families can contact ESP directly by phone or online to discuss availability and costs, which differ based on program. The only limitation to this program is that there are limited scholarships offered for families to help reduce the cost, meaning Jacob's family would need some sort of financial support to participate. ESP is a very beneficial resource for any person with a disability and can

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

support individuals into adulthood. It allows people of any ability to build relationships, do educational activities, and participate in games and physical exercise that they might not have access to outside of this resource.

### ***Sustainability***

#### *American Disability Act*

In 1990, the American Disability Act was enacted. This act was created to forbid acts of discrimination towards disabled people (ADA.gov, 2024). Many disabled individuals face hardships in accessing what they need and are treated differently. This act covers various sectors of life where discrimination is prevalent: employment, state/local government services, public transportation, public businesses, and telecommunications (ADA.gov, 2024).

Title 1: Employment - Employers are not allowed to discriminate against disabled individuals when hiring, deciding salaries, giving promotions, etc (ADA.gov, 2024). Disabled individuals must have access to the same opportunities as everyone else.

Title 2: State and Local Government Services - When devising services for the population, the state and local government must help disabled individuals receive access to these services (ADA.gov, 2024). Examples of services include transportation, voting, education, town meetings, etc (ADA.gov, 2024).

Title 3: Public Transportation - Disabled individuals must not be excluded from using or accessing public transportation services (ADA.gov, 2024). Public businesses - Disabled individuals must not be discriminated against when accessing services such as restaurants, doctor's visits, stores, etc (ADA.gov, 2024). Also, disabled people should be able to openly use private transit such as airports, trains, buses, etc (ADA.gov, 2024).

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

Title 4: Telecommunication - Telephone companies must help communicate effectively with individuals who may have trouble with speaking or hearing when interacting with one another (ADA.gov, 2024).

The American Disability Act lays out all its regulations, but disabled individuals are still discriminated against often. Especially in the employment sector, many disabled individuals do not receive the same job opportunities that other individuals do. The American Disability Act could be more specific as it is general. Something missing from the American Disability Act includes mental health disabilities. Often in places of employment, mental disabilities are overlooked and are not seen as serious as a physical disability. Also, the American Disability Act does not focus on the transportation concerns in rural areas. In rural areas, it is commonly known there is a lack of public transportation. Disabled individuals in rural areas will struggle in accessing public transportation in general and accommodations made to public transportation such as handicapped seating and ramps. Therefore, further regulations and legislation are recommended to be made in improving the American Disability Act.

### *Universal Health Care*

Universal health care is a health care system that ensures everyone has access to quality health services without financial hardship. This type of healthcare covers every essential type of healthcare from health promotion to prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation. To effectively implement a universal healthcare system, a country must be rooted in the countries they serve.

Primary Health Care is the most efficient and cost effective; it ensures that all those needs are identified, prioritized and addressed in an integrated way; that there is a robust and equipped health and care workforce; and that all sectors of society contribute to confronting the



## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

environmental and socio-economic factors that affect health and well-being, including preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies.

Having a Universal Healthcare System in the United States could help Jacob and his mother in numerous ways and would take out the high costs of privatized insurance in the current system. Universal Healthcare could provide Jacob with access to specialized care, such as occupational and speech therapy, which may be out of financial reach in the current healthcare system. Universal Healthcare would ultimately reduce a lot of the financial burden associated with Jacob's condition, and his mom would be able to spend money on other necessities. It could also provide access to mental health support and services for Jacob's mother that could help manage the emotional toll of raising a child with autism without family support nearby. Universal healthcare would make comprehensive, accessible, and affordable care for both Jacob and his mother, providing a more sustainable and supportive environment.

[https://www.who.int/health-topics/universal-health-coverage#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/universal-health-coverage#tab=tab_1)

### *Requirement of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in Public Schools*

In the United States, public schools are required to offer IEPs for students with disabilities from birth to age 22. According to Georgia's Rule 160-4-7-.01, purpose for exceptional students' rules, all children with disabilities are eligible for free appropriate education services. These services are designed to meet the unique needs of each student that will prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. These provisions apply to the Georgia department of education, and other state agencies with educational programs. This is a sustainable option for those with autism because it provides a cost-free integration program designed to meet the unique needs of each student. As autism manifests

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

differently in each person, this is a possible way to offer services that can help the student further themselves in their educational and professional development.

IEPs continue to be leading the status quo for special needs education in the United States. While IEPs provide numerous beneficial aids, it can also sometimes lead to segregation of students with disabilities from their peers. While the consensus leads to inclusion in classrooms, the American public school system is not fully equipped to upkeep this, leading to students being disengaged from their peers. This can cause social developmental delays in children with autism and can decrease acceptance of those with disability among peers. This can increase feelings of abnormality among students with disabilities, which can undermine full inclusion within the classroom. DEI workshops in public schools could greatly increase the acceptance of students with disabilities among peers at a young age. As they get older, this acceptance grows with them for an overall more inclusive viewpoint in their future.

### *Workplace Policies*

#### *Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993*

The Family and Medical Leave Act was signed into law in 1993 to accommodate the responsibilities and needs of employees in the United States. This legislation provides employees with 12 workweeks of leave during a 1-year period (U.S. Department of Labor, 2024). However, employees can only take this allowed time off from work under certain conditions. According to Congress' website, these conditions include the birth of a child, placement of a child for foster care or adoption, caring for a child, partner, or parent with a serious health condition, or the employee having their own health issue. With this, employers are not able to punish, fire, or discriminate against employees who take leave for any of the listed reasons (U.S. Department of Labor, 2024). While this policy provides employees who experience any of these situations with job security, some employees might need more than 12 workweeks, depending on the

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

circumstances. This can be especially difficult for single parents, like Jacob's mother, who does not have a partner or other family members there for support or to share the responsibilities.

Despite having little to no help, single parents must keep a job to provide for their children. For parents with children that have a disability or serious health condition, there is often a dilemma of either taking care of their child— such as taking them to therapy or doctor appointments— or going to work so that they can pay for their child's needs and keep their job. If the number of workweeks was increased, or if employers were required by law to provide flexible working arrangements for employees in special circumstances, this solution would be even more sustainable and beneficial for parents like Jacob's mother.

As previously stated, Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act protects employees from being discriminated against based on if they have a disability (ADA.gov, 2024). Although it is vague, the ADA also states that employers must provide reasonable accommodations to employees with disabilities. On the other hand, employers are not required to provide accommodations or flexible work schedules for employees that have family members or a child with a disability. While the Family and Medical Leave Act does give some protection in this type of situation, employees that need to leave or leave early on a regular basis are not entirely protected and are rarely accommodated. Additionally, because of the various responsibilities that might take them away from work, parents of children with disabilities are still discriminated against. Unfortunately, these employees often have few options because they need to keep their job or are unable to do anything about the unfair treatment without proof of discrimination. Because of these reasons and more, these protections are not always fully enforced. With all the progress that has occurred in American society and institutions since the most recent act signed into law in 1993, very little has been done to provide parents with more job security or support in the workplace. Whether it be through additional legislation or by more employers providing

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

flexibility for their employees, there are several ways that this solution could be improved for the benefit of parents and their child with a disability.

### ***Individual Reflections***

#### *Isabella*

After doing this Community Needs Assessment, I have learned many valuable things about the Athens community and the needs within it. Identifying the specific information for Jacob and his mother showed me the challenges that are faced by families caring for a child with severe special needs, while also dealing with financial problems. Finding the different resources that are available within the Athens community and online showed the gaps in support systems for single mothers that have limited family support. I believe the challenges that Jacob's mother faces as a single mother who works full time, while also being the primary caregiver to Jacob, are things that resonate with the reality of many caregivers in a similar situation.

In this project I learned that there are so many resources that are available within Athens for children with autism spectrum disorder, however access to them is more difficult for people who struggle financially. I also learned that people who do not have a ton of family support often struggle more when trying to care for a child with autism.

I think this issue is so important for everyone to read and learn about because it highlights the disparities in care amongst the more vulnerable populations in our community. Jacob's family faces so many challenges like finances, lack of support, and of course a child with a developmental disability, and all of these challenges cause stress and limit the opportunity for Jacob's development. I also think this issue shows the importance of organizations and resources and the need for them to provide accessible resources for everyone no matter their socioeconomic status. I will use my knowledge about this project in my future career as a nurse,

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

and I will advocate for all people no matter their ability or access to resources. I will also make sure to use this knowledge to provide all resources available for every patient I encounter.

*Sara*

Within this case project, I learned thoroughly about the difficulties individuals with Non-Verbal Autism face. I learned about difficulties from a health perspective but also from a cultural and societal perspective. In this specific case, the case-person is from a Vietnamese cultural background illustrating lack of beliefs for disabilities, resulting in delays of diagnosis and treatment. I learned that these delays may lead to a worse prognosis for Jacob and worsen his quality of life. Aside from cultural perceptions, societal views were evaluated. I learned how individuals with disabilities can experience hardships interacting with others from feeling socially isolated. I learned how cultural and societal barriers can create difficulties for Jacob.

Other challenges were encountered when searching for affordable resources for Jacob and his mother. This case-person is low-income and has a single-income mother, therefore there were barriers to reviving care. Many healthcare facilities providing therapies or diagnostic services had to be restricted due to lack of accepting health insurance.

I learned a lot about resources available within Athens, Georgia for individuals with Non-Verbal Autism. There are many types of facilities which can provide therapy, treatment, and diagnostic services. As Jacob's mother is single-income, I also learned about the many other necessities she must take care of such as funds for childcare, rent, and groceries. I also learned the importance of community support for Jacob and his mother to navigate through Jacob's diagnosis. It led me to recognize how helpful it is to have family nearby to be pillars of support.

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

This case project matters because this scenario happens in people's real life fairly often. This project brought awareness to the many struggles low-income individuals face on a daily basis. This resource handout is incredibly important for people to look at to make them aware of all the options around them. Going forward, in my future career, as a Physician's Assistant, I will take the knowledge and skills developed from this project. It will be my goal to make patients aware that there are always options available for them regardless of their social or economic status and that health should always be prioritized.

*Molly*

Throughout my time researching and working on this needs assessment project, I was able to learn more about the many factors that can impact a person's overall health as well as their ability to have their needs met. I also gained a better understanding of how difficult it can be to experience and overcome health disparities, as well as how determinants of health can intersect or negatively affect each other. After doing research on Jacob's diagnosis, I was able to see how much goes into caring for a child with autism spectrum disorder, and especially for a single mother like his that must also keep a steady income to provide for their basic life needs without any support. When finding therapy resources for Jacob, I learned more about how difficult it can be for low-income individuals to obtain the care they need. However, I was able to find good resources in Athens that can work with patients and find ways to provide them with treatment despite financial issues.

When trying to find the best resources available to Jacob and his mother, it was somewhat challenging to find therapies that were very low cost and were easily accessible for people using public transportation since Jacob and his mother did not have a car of their own. Also, it was difficult to find housing options that did not have a lot of eligibility requirements or

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

bad reviews online. Overall, I tried to pick the best ones that were easily accessible for Jacob and his mom and provide other options if one did not work out for some reason.

In the future, whether I am working in a clinical setting or not, I can use what I have learned during this project to provide others with helpful information and encourage them to research and/or use local resources if needed. This project was also a good reminder for me that I have to see people as a whole and consider all aspects of their life. Even if I do not have the same experiences as someone else, it is important for me to do what I can by helping, being an advocate, or listening to them. By doing this, my hope is that I will be able to improve the health and overall well-being of people I encounter going forward.

### *Madison*

As I reflect on this needs assessment process, there are so many points along the way that it becomes almost impossible for families like Jacob's to access education and resources tailored for them. Researching services offered in Athens-Clarke County, such as special education at Clarke County School District and the early intervention program Babies Can't Wait, shed light on early intervention and individualized education programs. Yet, daily complications of accessing these systems coupled with low socioeconomic status, and cultural obstacles also revealed how unreachable some resources could feel to the families in need. I realized that many programs, though available in theory, were in fact very hard to identify, learn about, or take advantage of.

One of the most difficult challenges I encountered was the difficulty in finding educational opportunities that accommodate Jacob's non-verbal autism. While public school systems offer special education programs, the process for securing an IEP involves multiple steps, including evaluations, meetings, and documentation that Jacob's mother may struggle to manage since her first language is not English, and she is working full time. Additionally, some

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

early interventions such as Babies Can't Wait stop their services at age three and give the family huge gaps during this time in which the help may be critical. Starting elementary school is dependent on whether Jacob will have proper transport conditions, knowledge, and trained caregivers. These special arrangements lead to high expenses and logistical complication.

Access to resources other than education was equally challenging. Many programs are cost money, including essential services such as speech-language therapy or behavioral interventions. While some needs are covered under Medicaid or CHIP, understanding the resources and processes to access their benefits is not easy. For Jacob's mother, cultural stigmas of disabilities add to barriers to seeking help. It became easy to understand how families could slip through the cracks, considering there was no easy, centralized way to figure out how to access such programs. These barriers underlined how systemic challenges to education and health consistently leave low-income and immigrant families without support.

This experience solidified the many larger systemic challenges confronting families and has shaped my path in ways that will forever make me a different kind of physician in the future. I now understand the importance of not only medical management, but also how patients and families might be supported to understand educational barriers and facilitate access. By advocating for a process of simplification, linking families with community resources, or collaborating with schools and support networks, I believe the information I learned from this paper will commit me to a holistic approach of healthcare. This reflection has really strengthened my quest to bridge the gaps in educational and healthcare access so that no child is ever denied an opportunity to thrive.





### *References*

*ABA therapy BlueSprig - Athens.* Bluesprig Autism. (2024, October 7).

<https://www.bluesprigautism.com/centers/georgia/bluesprig-athens/>

*ADA.gov. (2024, November 7). Introduction to the Americans with disabilities act.*

<https://www.ada.gov/topics/intro-to-ada/>

Advisors, Benefits. com. (2024, November 15). *How to apply for food stamps.*

Benefits.com - We Make Government Benefit Program Information Easier to

Understand. <https://benefits.com/food-stamps/how-to-apply-food-stamps/>

Al-Beltagi, M. (2021, May 9). *Autism medical comorbidities.* World journal of clinical

pediatrics. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8085719/>

*American Psychological Association. (2023, June 1). The Science of Friendship. Monitor*

*on Psychology.* [https://www.apa.org/monitor/2023/06/cover-story-science-](https://www.apa.org/monitor/2023/06/cover-story-science-friendship)

[friendship](https://www.apa.org/monitor/2023/06/cover-story-science-friendship)

An interview with thuong ho, ma, beba of vietnam. (n.d.). *Association for Science in*

*Autism Treatment.* Retrieved September 24, 2024, from

<https://asatonline.org/research-treatment/interviews/interview-with-thuong-ho/>

*Autism fact sheet - national autism association.* National Autism Association - Providing

real help and hope for the autism community since 2003. (2023, March 31).

[https://nationalautismassociation.org/resources/autism-fact-](https://nationalautismassociation.org/resources/autism-fact-sheet/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwooq3BhB3EiwAYqYoEh3IRLA8Jtp_2a3u8blmJ3inNpo5fvmrf8bbgJGuul5iyEP0UPuXiBoCRcwQAvD_BwE)

[sheet/?gad\\_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwooq3BhB3EiwAYqYoEh3IRLA8Jtp\\_2a3](https://nationalautismassociation.org/resources/autism-fact-sheet/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwooq3BhB3EiwAYqYoEh3IRLA8Jtp_2a3u8blmJ3inNpo5fvmrf8bbgJGuul5iyEP0UPuXiBoCRcwQAvD_BwE)

[u8blmJ3inNpo5fvmrf8bbgJGuul5iyEP0UPuXiBoCRcwQAvD\\_BwE](https://nationalautismassociation.org/resources/autism-fact-sheet/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwooq3BhB3EiwAYqYoEh3IRLA8Jtp_2a3u8blmJ3inNpo5fvmrf8bbgJGuul5iyEP0UPuXiBoCRcwQAvD_BwE)

*Autism support groups in Athens.* The Treetop ABA Therapy. (2024b).

[https://www.thetreetop.com/aba-therapy/autism-support-groups-in-](https://www.thetreetop.com/aba-therapy/autism-support-groups-in-athens#:~:text=The%20Athens%20County%20Autism%20Support%20Group%2)

[athens#:~:text=The%20Athens%20County%20Autism%20Support%20Group%2](https://www.thetreetop.com/aba-therapy/autism-support-groups-in-athens#:~:text=The%20Athens%20County%20Autism%20Support%20Group%2)

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

0organizes%20regular%20activities%20and,interaction%2C%20learning%2C%20and%20support

*Autism symptoms*. Autism Speaks. (2024). [https://www.autismspeaks.org/autism-symptoms?gad\\_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjw6c63BhAiEiwAF0EH1PdZ45dURue7gVNFR9Q4rUCVbg\\_KDeIa3CHFvjU8\\_S8D4FVQSgTPYRoCYh8QAvD\\_BwE](https://www.autismspeaks.org/autism-symptoms?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjw6c63BhAiEiwAF0EH1PdZ45dURue7gVNFR9Q4rUCVbg_KDeIa3CHFvjU8_S8D4FVQSgTPYRoCYh8QAvD_BwE)

*Babies can't wait*. Northeast Health District. (2023, June 27).

<https://northeasthealthdistrict.org/services/child-health/babies-cant-wait/>

*Basic eligibility | georgia medicaid*. (n.d.). Retrieved November 25, 2024, from

<https://medicaid.georgia.gov/how-apply/basic-eligibility>

Boone, K., & Bhatti, S. (2017, March 8). *The positive effect of SNAP benefits on participants and Communities*. Food Research & Action Center.

<https://frac.org/programs/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/positive-effect-snap-benefits-participants-communities>

Bureau, U. C. (n.d.). *Poverty in the united states: 2022*. Census.Gov. Retrieved September 25, 2024, from

<https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2023/demo/p60-280.html>

Bureau, U. C. (n.d.). *Health insurance coverage in the united states: 2022*. Census.Gov. Retrieved November 25, 2024, from

<https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2023/demo/p60-281.html>

*Butterfly Dreams Farm Equine therapy: Equine therapy: 2981 hog mountain road, Watkinsville, GA, USA*. Butterfly Dreams Far. (2024).

<https://www.butterflydreamsfarm.org/>

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

- CBPP. (2018). *SNAP Is Linked with Improved Nutritional Outcomes and Lower Health Care Costs*. CBPP. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/snap-is-linked-with-improved-nutritional-outcomes-and-lower-health-care-costs>
- CDC. (2024, July 19). *Data and statistics on autism spectrum disorder*. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). <https://www.cdc.gov/autism/data-research/index.html>
- CDC. (2024, May 14). *About autism spectrum disorder*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/autism/about/index.html>
- CDC. (2024). *Treatment and intervention for autism spectrum disorder*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/autism/treatment/index.html>
- CDC. (2023, March 23). *A snapshot of autism spectrum disorder in Georgia error processing SSI file*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/addm-community-report/georgia.html>
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid services. (2024, July). *2024-autism-infographic.pdf*. <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/benefits/downloads/2024-autism-infographic.pdf>
- Clarke County School District*. Documents | Clarke County School District. (n.d.). <https://www.clarke.k12.ga.us/documents/divisions-and-departments/academics/special-education/special-education-resources/646765>
- Disability poverty rate U.S. 2008-2022*. (2024). Statista. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/979003/disability-poverty-rate-us/>
- Families and children | Georgia medicaid*. (2024). Retrieved from <https://medicaid.georgia.gov/programs/families-and-children>

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

*Early learning centers.* Early Learning Programs - Registration Information. (2024).

<https://www.clarke.k12.ga.us/o/elc/page/early-learning-programs-registration-information>

*Extra special people, inc - extra special people.* Extra Special People - Creating transformative experiences for people with all abilities. (2024).

<https://espyouandme.org/>

*Family and medical leave act.* U.S. Department of Labor. (2024).

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fmla>

*Financial Assistance Resources.* Autism Speaks. (2024).

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/financial-autism-support>

Gajre, M. P., Shah, M., Pradhan, S. V., & Aseri, H. (2024). Examining the Impact of Group-Based Social Skills Intervention in Autistic Children Aged Eight to 15 Years. *Cureus*, 16(2), e53376. <https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.53376>

Gengoux, G. W., Schapp, S., Burton, S., Ardel, C. M., Libove, R. A., Baldi, G., Berquist, K. L., Phillips, J. M., & Hardan, A. Y. (2019). Effects of a parent-implemented Developmental Reciprocity Treatment Program for children with autism spectrum disorder. *Autism*, 23(3), 713-725. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361318775538>

Georgia.gov. (2024). *Apply for Medicaid.* Georgia.gov. <https://georgia.gov/apply-medicaid>

Georgiaheadstart.org. (2024). <https://georgiaheadstart.org/offices/clarke-county-school-district/>

*Georgia Vietnamese population percentage city rank.* USA.com. (2024).

<http://www.usa.com/rank/georgia-state--vietnamese-population-percentage--city-rank.htm>

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

GoodRx. (2024). *Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)*. GoodRx.

<https://www.goodrx.com/insurance/health-insurance/childrens-health-insurance-program>

Ha, V. S., Whittaker, A., Whittaker, M., & Rodger, S. (2014). Living with autism spectrum disorder in Hanoi, Vietnam. *Social Science & Medicine*, 120, 278-285.

<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2014.09.038>

Home. Athens Regional Library System. (2024, October 25). <https://athenslibrary.org/>

Hopebridge. (2024). *Therapy & Services*. Therapy & Services | Hopebridge Autism Therapy Center. <https://www.hopebridge.com/autism-services/>

Hsu, S. H. (2013). Chapter 60 - Cultural Influences on Youth Alcohol and Drug Use. In P. M. Miller (Ed.), *Principles of Addiction* (pp. 585-595). Academic Press.

<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-398336-7.00060-7>

Huer, M. B., Saenz, T. I., & Diem Doan, J. H. (2001). Understanding the Vietnamese American Community: Implications for Training Educational Personnel Providing Services to Children with Disabilities. *Communication Disorders Quarterly*, 23(1), 27-39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/152574010102300105>

*Journal of neurodevelopmental disorders*, 13(1), 8. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s11689-020-09350-1>

Kuschner, E. S., Kim, M., Bloy, L., Dipiero, M., Edgar, J. C., & Roberts, T. P. L. (2021). MEG-PLAN: a clinical and technical protocol for obtaining magnetoencephalography data in minimally verbal or nonverbal children who have autism spectrum disorder.

Locations. (2024). <https://www.thetreetop.com/locations#georgia>

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

The Lancet Public Health (2022). The cost of living: an avoidable public health crisis.

*The Lancet. Public health*, 7(6), e485. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667\(22\)00120-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(22)00120-7)

*Mary Frances early college of education*. Center for Autism and Behavioral Education Research - Mary Frances Early College of Education. (2024).

<https://coe.uga.edu/directory/autism-center/>

*Medical conditions associated with autism*. Autism Speaks. (2024).

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/medical-conditions-associated-autism>

*Medicaid Eligibility Income Chart by State (updated May 2024)*. Medicaid Planning Assistance. (2024, May 30).

<https://www.medicaidplanningassistance.org/medicaid-eligibility-income-chart/>

Medicaid.gov. (2024a). *Where can people get help with Medicaid & Chip?* Medicaid.

<https://www.medicaid.gov/about-us/where-can-people-get-help-medicaid-chip/index.html>

Medicaid.gov. (2024b). *Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)*. Medicaid.

<https://www.medicaid.gov/chip/index.html>

Medicaid.gov. (2024c). *Chip benefits*. Medicaid.

<https://www.medicaid.gov/chip/benefits/index.html>

*Mykta, L. F. and L. (2024, October 5). Supplemental poverty measure shows who benefits from government programs. Census.gov.*

<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2018/09/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-lifts-millions-out-of-poverty.html>

National Autism Association *Autism fact sheet - national autism association*.- Providing real help and hope for the autism community since 2003. (2023, March 31).

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

[https://nationalautismassociation.org/resources/autism-fact-sheet/?gad\\_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwooq3BhB3EiwAYqYoEh3IRLA8Jtp\\_2a3u8blmJ3inNpo5fvmrf8bbgJGuul5iyEP0UPuXiBoCRcwQAvD\\_BwE](https://nationalautismassociation.org/resources/autism-fact-sheet/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwooq3BhB3EiwAYqYoEh3IRLA8Jtp_2a3u8blmJ3inNpo5fvmrf8bbgJGuul5iyEP0UPuXiBoCRcwQAvD_BwE)

NeuroLaunch editorial. (2024, August 27). *Speech therapy for autism: Improving communication skills*. NeuroLaunch.com. <https://neurolaunch.com/speech-therapy-for-autism/>

*Nonverbal autism: Symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment*. (2021, June 30).

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/non-verbal-autism>

Perceptions of disability in the vietnamese american community—By kim dieu, educational psychologist at the center for autism and neurodevelopmental disorders (Families and schools together) and doctoral student at chapman university. (n.d.). *Thompson Policy Institute*. Retrieved September 24, 2024, from <https://blogs.chapman.edu/tpi/2018/02/22/perceptions-of-disability-in-the-vietnamese-american-community/>

*Resources*. Autism Foundation. (2024). <https://www.autism-foundation.org/resources>

Ruiz, Z. T. and N. G. (2024, March 27). Key facts about Asian Americans living in poverty. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/03/27/key-facts-about-asian-americans-living-in-poverty/>

Schaeffer, K. (2022b, January 18). *A growing share of Americans say affordable housing is a major problem where they live*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/01/18/a-growing-share-of-americans-say-affordable-housing-is-a-major-problem-where-they-live/>



- Sener, I. N., Lee, R. J., & Elgart, Z. (2016). Potential Health Implications and Health Cost Reductions of Transit-Induced Physical Activity. *Journal of transport & health*, 3(2), 133–140. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jth.2016.02.002>
- ShineLight. (2020, September 8). *What are the benefits of Autism Support Groups?* <https://shine-light.org/community-living/what-are-the-benefits-of-autism-support-groups/#:~:text=Individuals%20and%20families%20who%20join,for%20dealing%20with%20specific%20situations.>
- Snap Eligibility*. Food and Nutrition Service U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2024). <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility>
- Study: Reducing biases about autism may increase social inclusion - news center | the university of texas at dallas*. (n.d.). Retrieved September 24, 2024, from <https://news.utdallas.edu/health-medicine/autism-biases-study-2021/>
- Sussex Publishers. (n.d.). *The single-parent family*. Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/family-dynamics/single-parent-family?msockid=0f82259256d3697118ea309857fa6865>
- The Special Needs Database*. Parent to Parent of Georgia. (2024, May 13). [https://www.p2pga.org/the-special-needs-database/?gad\\_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjwmt24BhDPArisAJFYKk0KRe46RC3CsGBF5T5y6uAnCtv\\_gnYQ141OOxqQKuYG0DzykPNK9PYaAsKxEALw\\_wcB](https://www.p2pga.org/the-special-needs-database/?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjwmt24BhDPArisAJFYKk0KRe46RC3CsGBF5T5y6uAnCtv_gnYQ141OOxqQKuYG0DzykPNK9PYaAsKxEALw_wcB)
- Thi Vui, L., Duc, D. M., Thuy Quynh, N., Giang, N. T. H., Mai, V. T. T., Ha, B. T. T., & Van Minh, H. (2021). Early screening and diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders in Vietnam: A population-based cross-sectional survey. *Journal of public health research*, 11(2), 2460. <https://doi.org/10.4081/jphr.2021.2460>

## NEEDS ASSESEMENT PROJECT

*The real cost of autism treatment.* (n.d.). Retrieved September 25, 2024, from  
<https://www.abtaba.com/blog/how-much-does-autism-treatment-cost>

*Transit: Athens-Clarke County, GA - Official Website.* Transit | Athens-Clarke County, GA - Official Website. (2024). <https://www.accgov.com/transit>

*Treatment options—Autism science foundation.* (2021, October 19). Autism Science Foundation - Supporting and Sharing Autism Research to Improve the Real Lives of Real People. <https://autismsciencefoundation.org/treatment-options/>

Truong, D. M., Mire, S. S., Day, S. X., Ni, L., & Keller-Margulis, M. (2023). A cross-cultural comparison of a measure of parent perceptions among families of children with autism in Vietnam. *Autism*, 27(4), 997-1010.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613221141262>

*Understanding iep's.* (2019, May 11). Parent to Parent of Georgia.  
<https://www.p2pga.org/roadmap/education/understanding-ieps/>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2021, April 19). *What are the treatments for autism?*. Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.  
<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/autism/conditioninfo/treatments>

Van Tran, C., Pham, M. M., Mai, P. T., Le, T. T., & Nguyen, D. T. (2020). Inclusive Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Elementary Schools in Vietnam: The Current Situation and Solutions. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 12(3), 265-273.  
<https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=c13330b5-94d7-3255-b95b-f6c987324007>

*Vietnamese traditional values: Family, respect for elders, community cohesion, and filial piety.* Visit Vietnam Guide. (2023a, August 5).

<https://www.visitvietnamguide.com/explore-vietnamese-culture-traditions-cuisine-art-festivals-and-modern-influences/vietnamese-traditional-values-family-respect-for-elders-community-cohesion-and-filial-piety/#:~:text=The%20emphasis%20on%20family%2C%20respect%20for%20elders%2C%20community,social%20norms%2C%20and%20even%20legal%20and%20governmental%20policies.>

*Welcome to the health insurance marketplace®.* (n.d.). HealthCare.Gov. Retrieved November 25, 2024, from <https://www.healthcare.gov/>

Winnie. (n.d.). *Cost of child care in georgia by age, city & type.* Retrieved November 25, 2024, from <https://winnie.com/resources/cost-of-child-care-in-georgia-by-age-city-type>

Ying, K. C., Browne, G., Hutchinson, M., Cashin, A., & Binh, B. V. (2012). Autism in Vietnam: the case for the development and evaluation of an information book to be distributed at the time of diagnosis. *Issues Ment Health Nurs*, 33(5), 288-292. <https://doi.org/10.3109/01612840.2011.653039>

Zapparrata, N. M., Brooks, P. J., & Ober, T. M. (2023). Slower Processing Speed in Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Meta-analytic Investigation of Time-Based Tasks. *Journal of Autism & Developmental Disorders*, 53(12), 4618–4640. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-022-05736-3>

