

Access to Developmental Services for Individuals with Autism

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Research Question

How does ASD eligibility to receive state-provided developmental services differ across New England states?

Terminology

DDS: “Department of Developmental Services”; Broad term given to any state-mandated system to provide services to individuals with disabilities

Research Goal

- Understand the differences in eligibility for DDS services, specifically for individuals with ASD, across New England states
- Analyze the success of the NSDDDS in terms of achieving “equity”

History of Statewide Services for Developmental Disabilities

- 1960s: John F. Kennedy's "Combat Mental R" campaign
- Panel on MR proposed 97 recommendations
- Eight states met February, 1963 to discuss planning
 - Creation of the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS)
- Holds state services accountable & promotes equitable services

What does DDS provide?

- Case management
- Employment opportunities
- Residential services
- Family support
- Therapy services
- Advocacy and legal action

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

- Neurological and developmental disability
- Characterized by:
 - Persistent deficits in social-emotional reciprocity across multiple contexts
 - Restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviors or interests
- Spectrum

Procedure

- Went directly to state website (Eg. CT.gov)
- Searched “Developmental Services Eligibility”
 - If no results, use outside search engine “(State) Developmental Services Eligibility”
- Search for keyword “Autism”
 - If no results, search “ASD”

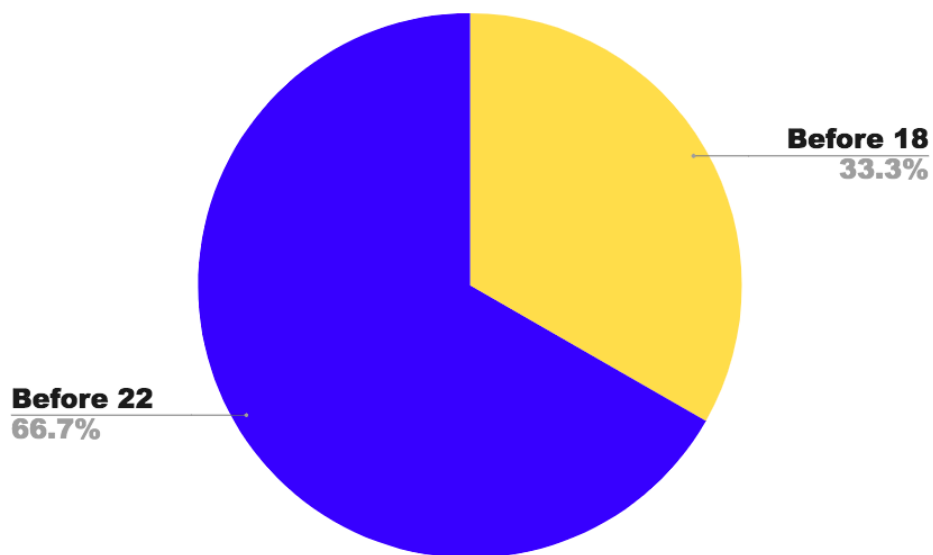
Results

Similarities across all 6 states:

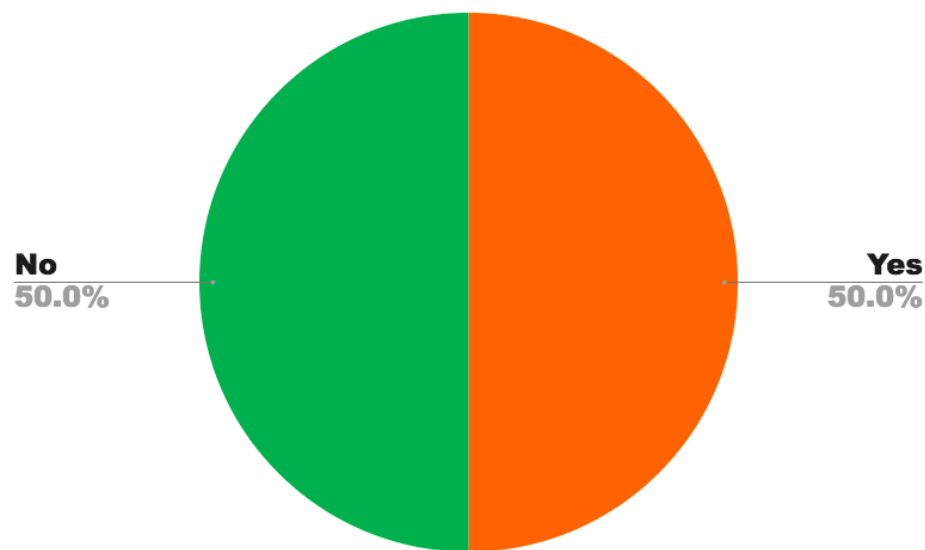
- State residency
- Medicaid (or state equivalent) eligibility
- Disability expected to continue indefinitely
- Limitations in the areas of: Self-care, Self-direction

Results

Age of manifestation?

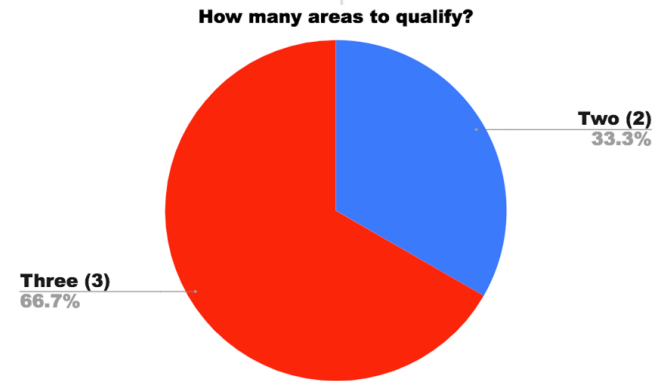
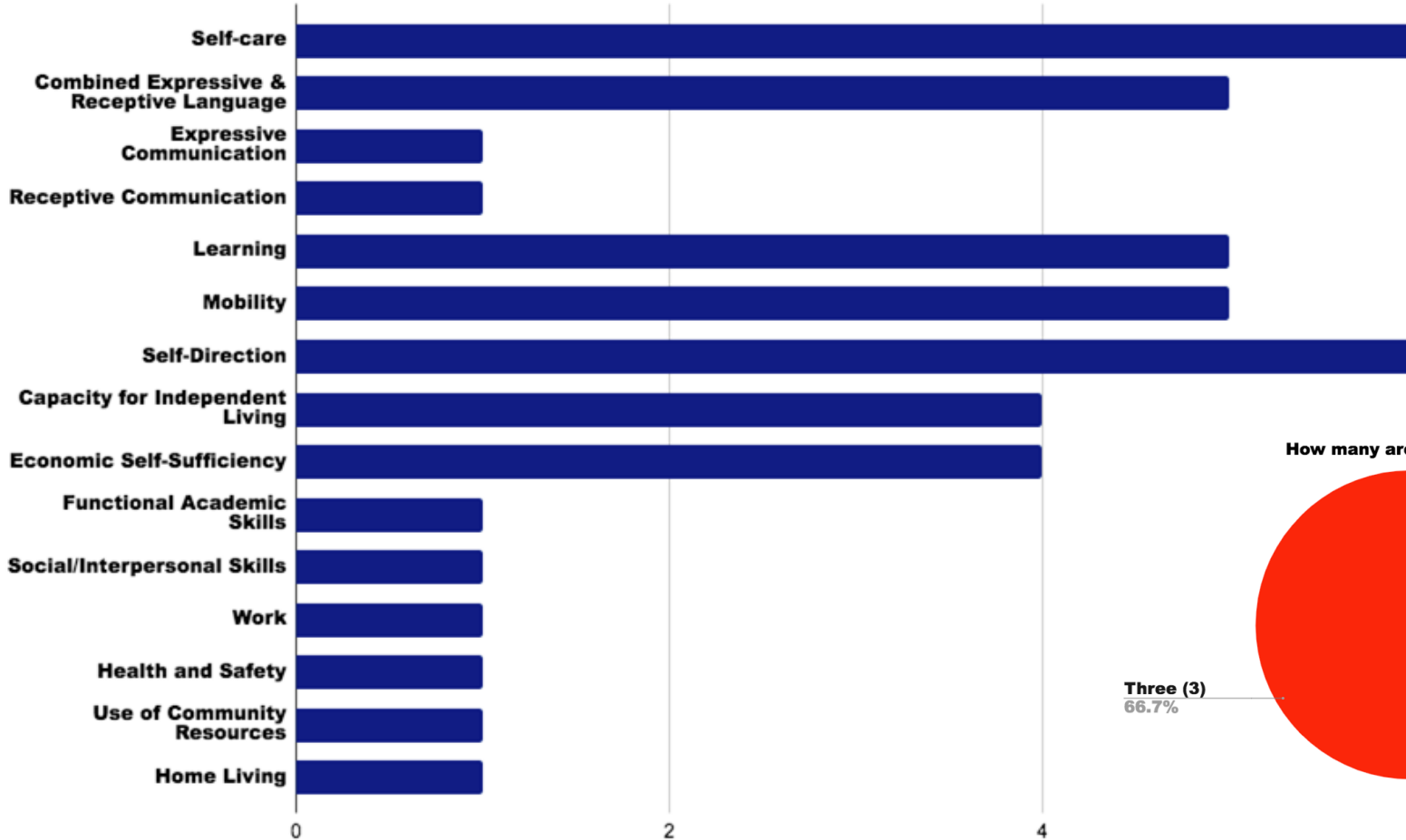


Is IQ score required?



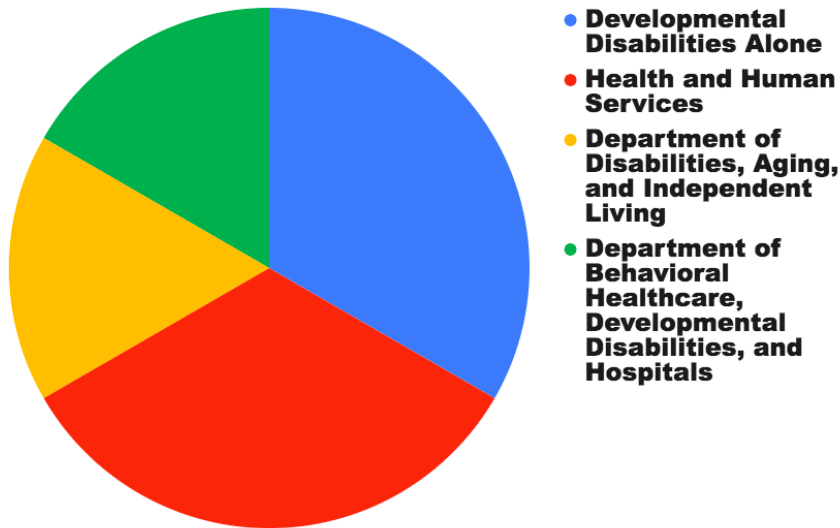
Results

Substantial functional deficits in the areas of...

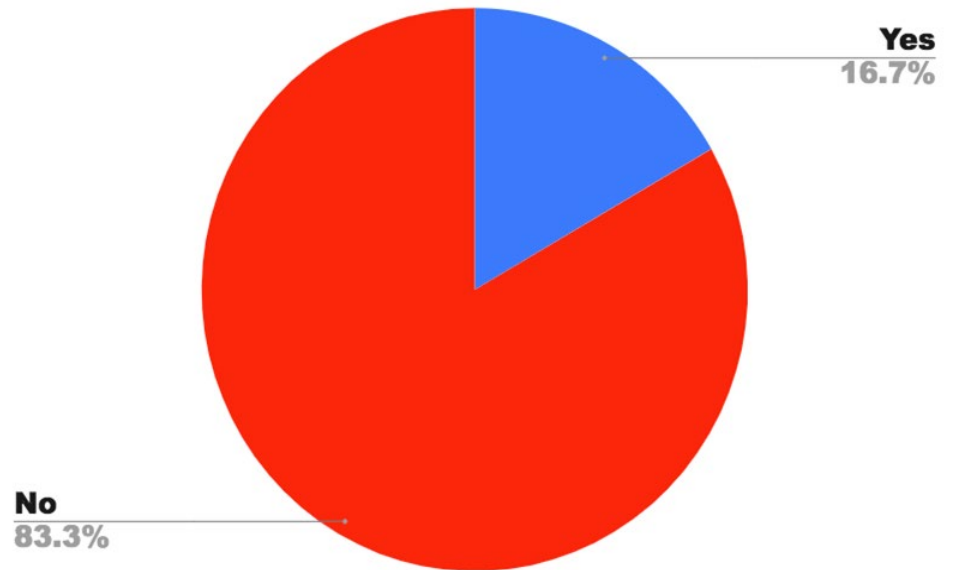


Results

What does the department cover?



Is ASD specifically separated out in terms of eligibility criteria?



Limitations

- Only looks at 6 states (same geographic area)
- Time restrictions
- Interrater reliability
- Operationalization
- Inconsistency of publication location

Implications

- Eligibility for DDS across New England States essentially has the same criteria for someone with ASD as compared to someone with any other developmental or intellectual disability
- Criteria is not uniformly defined
- An individual with ASD may be eligible for services in 1 state but not in another

Future Directions

Results of this research can be used to compare if the eligibility for DDS services continues to be the same for individuals specifically with ASD in different geographic regions.

The specific training offered to NASDDDS professionals could be examined to determine areas of disconnect.

Conclusion

- There are many similarities between states, but it isn't uniformed
- Terms are often not defined clearly
 - Is this on purpose?
- More research needs to be conducted
 - Do more states have specific criteria than only CT?

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