

The Great Plains Autism Spectrum Disorders Treatment Program (GPAST)

provides training, research and diagnostics to North Dakota children and youth suspected of having or diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). GPAST autism services are currently being provided through community based screenings and diagnostic clinics as well as a variety of research studies.

GPAST supports infrastructure development and technology innovations for service delivery to rural families of children with autism in North Dakota.

(Autism Facts)

- Autism prevalence is 1 in 150 in the U.S.
- 1 in 95 children with autism in the U.S. are boys.
- In ND, current prevalence rates are 1 in 238 school-age children.
- The numbers of ND school-age children served under the autism category have increased five fold in the last 10 years.
- 75.8% of ND students with autism receive services from the 8 largest special education units.
- 24.2% of remaining ND students with autism live in remote/frontier areas with limited access to trained professionals.
- Estimated lifetime cost of autism is \$3.2 million per individual, which means it will cost ND \$1.4 billion in health care, services and lost productivity each year.

(For More Information)

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Funding for this project was provided by Congressionally Directed Funding through the US Department of Health and Human Services, Maternal and Child Health Bureau #H1TMC10804

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Great Plains
(AUTISM)
Spectrum Disorders Treatment Program





(GOAL 1)

North Dakota (ND) will increase its personnel capacity to deliver diagnostic and follow-up services to rural children and youth with autism and their families.

GPAST autism services are currently being provided through community based interdisciplinary screening and diagnostic clinics. Throughout our funding period our GPAST team plans to:

- coordinate with community professionals to provide screening and diagnostic services.
- utilize distance technologies to connect families and their child's teachers to professionals.
- enable parents and teachers to access services without having to travel long distances.
- find a suitable service delivery model that meets the needs of our state and provides a quality and worthwhile service to families.



(GOAL 2)

ND will have an effective telehealth system protocol for delivery of services to rural children and youth with autism and their families.

GPAST is currently conducting a variety of research projects in the state of ND for individuals with ASD including:

- Young children
- Adolescents
- Young adults

Past examples of our research projects test various technology options that provide services in rural areas, such as:

- TeachTown® computer-assisted intervention
- Video Modeling with flip video cameras
- Rethink Autism™, a web based ABA platform



We also provide other assistive technology model demonstration projects, which are smaller versions of full research projects designed to introduce cutting edge technologies, such as an iPod Touch with assistive applications, to individuals with ASD.



(GOAL 3)

ND will have an improved infrastructure for developing research, training and intervention systems for children and youth with autism and their families.

GPAST utilizes a variety of methods to increase public awareness about autism including:

- A series of webcasts related to autism
- Various presentations about autism
- Hosting trainings about autism research
- Our website (www.ndcpd.org/autism) where anyone can find useful links and information about our research and diagnostic services.



GPAST attempts to improve ND's infrastructure by including parents and professionals in many of our strategies through our Autism Advisory Council and by incorporating the State Plan on Autism and the State Autism Task Force.