

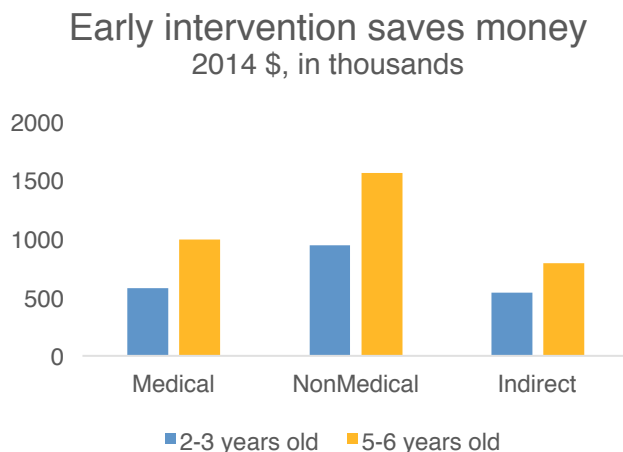
# The Value of Early Intervention for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

## Overview and Fast Facts

Does early intervention reduce the cost of treating ASD and improve outcomes? This brief provides a synthesis of the existing literature, which suggests that costs can be reduced and outcomes improved with earlier clinical intervention.

### How much does ASD cost?

Comprehensive lifetime cost estimates, including both private (lost wages) and public (medical and social services) costs, increase as age of first clinical intervention is delayed. The figure



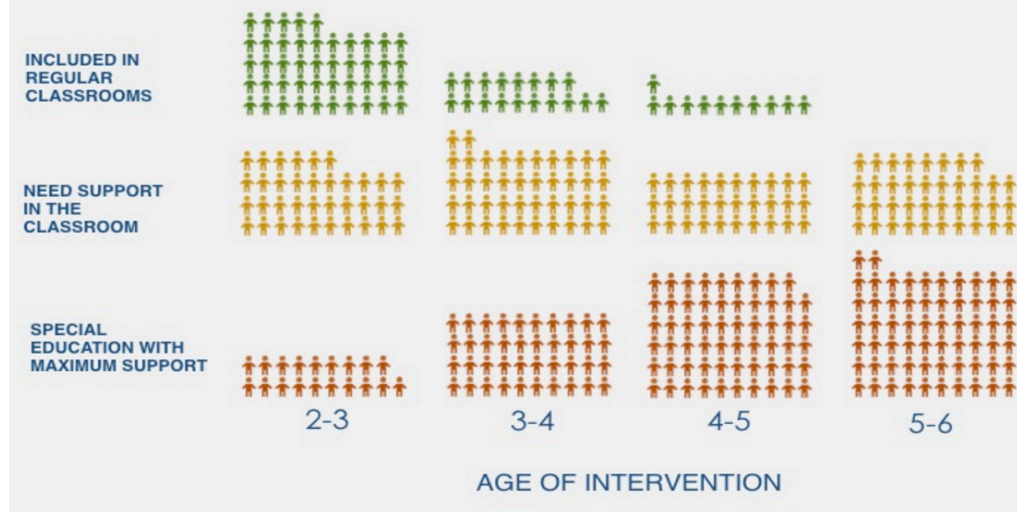
compares the three major cost categories of medical costs, nonmedical services (social and community support services) and indirect costs (parental and child lost wages), at the typical age of intervention of 5.8 years old, and a feasibly early intervention of 2 years old. Cumulative **savings** total about **\$1.2m** (adjusted to 2014 dollars) of which 29% come from increased independence. Late treatment is associated with **37% increase** in costs over a lifetime.

### Do kids improve clinically?

Early intervention with high quality clinical services can lead to a child's inclusion in a regular classroom, rather than a special education setting, and by extension, lead to more independent lives in adulthood.

- Education, as well as other important clinical outcomes such as developmental rate, ability to adapt, and cognitive achievement, all improve as a result of early intervention.
- **86%** of children have better educational placement with early intervention compared to late intervention

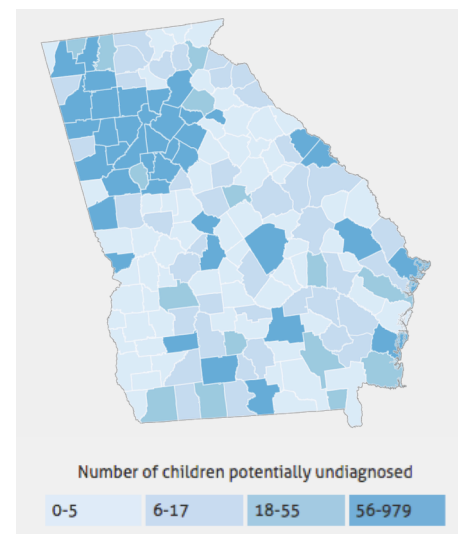
## Expected Education Outcomes after Treatment, by Age



How big is the problem in GA?

Using 2009 data and the 2014 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's prevalence rates for ASD in Georgia, an estimated **10,048** children on Medicaid should have an ASD diagnosis, but only 581 kids did. Potentially **94% of children with ASD go undiagnosed in Georgia.**

- All 156 counties in GA underdiagnose ASD by 78% or more.
- Some counties have an estimated diagnosis gap as high as 96%



| Rank | State(s)                                 | Diagnosis gap (%) |
|------|--|-------------------|
| 1-3  | Louisiana<br>South Carolina<br>Tennessee | 99                |
| 4    | Alabama                                  | 98                |
| 5-6  | Arkansas<br>Mississippi                  | 96                |
| 7    | Georgia                                  | 94                |
| 8    | North Carolina                           | 93                |
| 9    | Florida                                  | 92                |

Georgia ranks **7<sup>th</sup>** out of the 9 southeastern states in biggest diagnosis gap for ASD. Its relative better performance, along with North Carolina, could be attributed to a university-based National Center of Excellence for ASD treatment in those states.