

# The Nevada Autism Summit



NAS

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## Primary Goals

- Collect & analyze data from stakeholders statewide on lifespan issues related to Autism Spectrum Disorders.
- Develop core value and action statements to guide future activities.
- Develop partnerships and pursue funding opportunities to support implementation of determined priorities.

## Activities

### NAS Steering Committee:

- A 14-member steering committee of parents, service providers, and agency representatives from urban and rural Nevada provided input and guidance to project staff concerning all aspects of summit goals.

### NAS Surveys:

- Surveys in English and Spanish queried parents and service providers on assessment, diagnosis, education, intervention, future needs, and perceptions of strengths and challenges of the present service delivery system. 700 surveys have been submitted.

### NAS Summit:

- A 2-day summit was held on November 11-12, 2005. Approximately 85 parents, service providers, and agency representatives from all over Nevada attended. Activities involved presentations, break out groups organized by topics, large group discussions, and individual rankings of values and recommended actions.

## Outcomes

1. Parents typically become concerned about their child's development between 1 & 2 yrs of age; diagnosis is, on the average, 1-2+ years later. This delay in diagnosis is unacceptable for parents; it is more acceptable to and explainable by service providers.
2. Parents often feel that the professionals they first consult dismiss their initial concerns. They attribute this to being undervalued by professionals and to the lack of experience by the average front line service provider.
3. Parents and service providers agree that autism services in Nevada are average or below. Parents' overall ratings are significantly lower than the ratings of service providers.
4. Parents and service providers agree that Nevada is in critical need of qualified service providers & evidenced-based services that are consumer/family driven and provide choices for consumers. Critical personnel issues include a mandated entry level of competence & continuing education to ensure successful recruitment and retention of qualified personnel. Quality services that support a developmental, relationship-based orientation are a high priority.
5. Parents and service providers agree that an area of relative strength is the use of a multidisciplinary team in the service delivery process. There is less agreement regarding the role the family currently plays and should play on the team.

6. Urgent critical needs reported by parents include: (a) access to best practice services in early identification/diagnosis; (b) access to choices in services and case management beginning with early intervention; (c) improved/increased access to social skills training and sexuality instruction; (d) improvement in services during transitional stages and for adults.

### Ratings of Overall Nevada Services for Autism

	<b>Parents N=266</b>	<b>Service Providers N=376</b>
<b>Outstanding</b>	2.8%	3.3%
<b>Above Average</b>	12.5%	15.4%
<b>Average</b>	18.1%	<b>51.2%</b>
<b>Below Average</b>	<b>34.7%</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Very Poor</b>	<b>31.9%</b>	4.1%
<b>Did not reply</b>	N=22	N=30

### Core Value Statement

All Nevadans with autism, and their families, should have access to choices in high quality, coordinated services throughout the lifespan that are consumer/family driven, evidence-based, and grounded in a respect for the individuals served and their diverse histories, needs, strengths, and interests.

### Action Statement

Nevada is in critical need of a state funded Center or Centers that provide information, coordinate efforts, and function to effectively organize the provision of services for individuals with autism, their families, service providers, and related agencies statewide.

### Future Plans

- **NAS Phase 2 (In progress):** Develop a comprehensive action plan to address current and future state needs.
- Develop a state autism website with best practice and evidenced based information.
- Conduct pilot screening of preschool children ages 12 to 36 months.
- Train parents and service providers in social-based assessment & intervention.
- Pursue funding to support a developmental, relationship-based system of service delivery for families in urban and rural Nevada.

***Note: The Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities included support for autism projects in their new 5-year strategic plan.***

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