

# Autism Grant Program: Annual Progress Report

July 2024

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### Agency Purpose

Our purpose is to strengthen Texas through higher education. By making higher education accessible to a wide range of people, we can ensure Texas remains one of the world's most innovative, valuable educational systems. By bringing together data, policymakers, and institutions, we can inform sensible policies that make a difference and make education beyond high school available to every person in our state. When we do that, we will improve lives, communities, and our shared economy.

### Agency Vision

The THECB will be recognized as an international leader in developing and implementing innovative higher education policy to accomplish our mission.

### Agency Philosophy

The THECB will promote access to and success in quality higher education across the state with the conviction that access and success without quality is mediocrity and that quality without access and success is unacceptable.

The THECB's core values are:

**Accountability:** We hold ourselves responsible for our actions and welcome every opportunity to educate stakeholders about our policies, decisions, and aspirations.

**Efficiency:** We accomplish our work using resources in the most effective manner.

**Collaboration:** We develop partnerships that result in student success and a highly qualified, globally competent workforce.

**Excellence:** We strive for excellence in all our endeavors.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services.

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## Introduction: Autism Grant Program

The 84th, 85th, and 86th Texas Legislatures appropriated \$8.1 million to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to make competitive grant awards to Texas public and private general academic institutions that conduct research and/or provide treatment to children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The 87th and 88th Texas Legislatures, Regular Sessions, continued support for the program by each appropriating \$7.41 million to the THECB and expanding eligibility by authorizing the participation of Texas health-related institutions and independent universities. In 2023, the General Appropriations Act, House Bill 1, Article III, Rider 40, directed the THECB to offer the following three categories of funding to eligible institutions:

- Parent-directed Treatment – \$2,055,000 total available in each fiscal year for research centers serving a combined total of at least 750 children with ASD annually through Parent-directed treatment methods.
- Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) Training for Teachers/Paraprofessionals – \$950,000 total available in each fiscal year to autism research centers that serve a combined total of at least 2,547 children with ASD per year by training teachers and/or paraprofessionals. Teachers and paraprofessionals may be in public or private institutions, teaching prekindergarten through 12th grade.
- Research, Development, and Evaluation of Innovative Autism Treatment Models – \$700,000 total available in each fiscal year to one or more autism research centers to research, develop, and evaluate innovative autism treatment models that provide treatment to the greatest number of children with ASD.

The THECB administers the Autism Grant Program (AGP) through a competitive grant application process. Grant recipients provide treatments through multiple approaches: conventional treatments (behavioral analysis), innovative treatments, treatments in the public school system, and treatments in the home environment with parents and caregivers.

Since the start of the program in FY 2016, the AGP grants have served a total of 72,442 children over six rounds of grant awards to institutions, more than 2.75 times the minimum target of 26,376. Over this period, the AGP has undertaken the following activities:

- The initial ASD grant awards were made in all three funding categories in FY 2016. Grant recipients treated 17,229 children with ASD in the first grant cycle (2016-2018), which ended in June 2018.
- A second round of awards was made to support Parent-directed Treatment in FY 2017. The initial AGP grants ended in June 2018, and the second set of grant awards for the Parent-directed Treatment ended in June 2019. An additional 917 children with ASD were treated during this second grant period (2017-2019).
- A third round of ASD grant awards was made in all three funding categories in FY 2018, ending in June 2020. This third grant cycle (2018-2020) allowed for the treatment of an additional 23,331 children with ASD.

- A fourth round of AGP grant awards was made to support Parent-directed Treatment in FY 2019. The fourth round ended in December 2020 and served 6,380 additional children with ASD.
- A fifth round of ASD grant awards was made in all three funding categories in FY 2020. This fifth grant cycle served an additional 17,504 children with ASD.
- A sixth round of ASD grant awards was made in all three funding categories in FY 2022, ending in May 2024. Since 2022, this sixth grant cycle has served 7,081 additional children with ASD to date for a combined total of 72,442 children with ASD served since the program began in 2016. Individual grants have received no-cost extensions of various lengths, depending on the circumstances and unexpended grant funding, particularly as it pertains to delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and/or the statewide freeze storm in February 2021.

**Table 1. Autism Grant Program Categories and Service, March 2023 through March 2024**

Autism Grant Program Category	Biennium Amount Awarded	Children Served	Teachers/ Paraprofessionals
Parent-directed Treatment	\$4,110,000	1,232	n/a
Behavior Analyst Training for Teachers/Paraprofessionals	\$1,900,000	4,278	383
Innovative Autism Treatment Models	\$1,400,000	168	n/a

Source: AGP grantee required reports

The AGP has a target for its recipients to serve a combined 13,188 children with ASD for grants awarded in FYs 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023, or 26,376 children since the program began in 2016. The program is exceeding its targets for the Parent-directed Treatment (minimum 750 each FY) and Behavior Analyst Training for Teachers/Paraprofessionals (minimum 2,547 each FY).

The AGP also included \$150,000 per fiscal year for administrative costs, which the THECB may use to support staff salaries, external reviewers, and other related administrative costs.

## Program Development

Rules for the AGP were established using the THECB’s negotiated rulemaking process in 2015 with input from stakeholders, including representatives from Texas public universities, the Texas Autism Research and Resource Center, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, and the Texas Council on Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders. Following the negotiated rulemaking process, the THECB adopted rules for the program in April 2016. Rules are codified in Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Chapter 6, Subchapter K. The THECB maintains a [webpage for the Autism Grant Program](#) is on its website.

## Review, Assessment, and Selection Process

The AGP is a competitive grant, and applications are reviewed by THECB staff and external expert reviewers. To assist in the selection process, the THECB contracted with four external reviewers with primary expertise in parent-based treatment and/or teacher/paraprofessional training. Applications were reviewed by a five-member team comprised of the THECB grant administrator and four external content expert reviewers.

Proposals were assessed based on criteria described in the request for applications (RFA), including the projected number of children with ASD to be served, feasibility of the timeline, attainability of the goals, long-term influence of the project past the grant period, management structure, plans for evaluation, sufficiency and economy of the budget, and qualifications of the directors and key staff. The THECB staff compiled the assessment results and made recommendations for funding to the Commissioner of Higher Education. The Commissioner reviewed the information and finalized award selection for funding.

## Fiscal Years 2022-2023

An RFA with funding available for all three categories of the grant program was published April 2022 for FY 2022. Seven applications were received for Parent-directed Treatment, and seven were awarded. Seven applications were received for Teacher/Paraprofessional Training, and four were awarded. Seven applications were received for Innovative Treatment models, and three were awarded. An award increase from previous cycle unexpended funds was offered in 2023 if allocation acceptance was deemed manageable by grantees. Award increases were processed for 12 of the 14 grantees. This grant cycle ends May 31, 2024.

### Parent-directed Treatment

In the Parent-directed Treatment category, the THECB funded the following seven applications:

#### 1. Texas A&M University, Center on Disability and Development

The project, Coach-to-Communicate: Parent Partnerships Supporting English Learners and Adolescents, provides online instructional modules and coaching for parents to elicit communication from their children with ASD. The project serves parents of school-aged children with autism and involves the development and delivery of strategies and materials aimed at addressing the communication needs of adolescents, those with more complex communication skills, and English-language learners. Two new online modules are being developed (adolescent intervention and complex communication instruction), and current modules and parent coaching materials will be translated into additional languages spoken in Texas (i.e., Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Hindi, and Bengali). The project builds upon a THECB-funded (2016-22) Parent-directed Treatment project.

Development of new training modules for parents has been completed and is expected to be available to parents during the next reporting period. Six modules are currently available in Spanish. The Coach to Communicate module has also been translated into Thai. The project website was updated ([autism.tamu.edu](http://autism.tamu.edu)) to provide ease of information access to for parents with English as a second language.

Total award: \$500,000

Expenditures to date: \$253,013.13

Parent/children pairs projected to be served: 190

Parent/children pairs served to date: 242

#### 2. Texas Tech University, Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research

The Mobile and Telehealth Outreach Clinic for Autism is an amalgamated initiative for addressing disparities for ASD in families with restricted access to services. This model combines two previous models to better serve families who have a child with ASD. This allows the Burkhart Center to continue its goal of decreasing the disparities sometimes present in rural communities by providing high-quality intervention services and training to parents across all areas of Texas as well as families who do not have the resources available to receive services.

Parent training presentations have occurred via collaboration with multiple Education Service Center Regions throughout Texas, including Regions 8, 9, 11, 13, and 15. As of this date, 10 training workshops have been conducted.

Responses via a social validity feedback survey indicate 100% of families replied that training was very applicable and they were somewhat to very likely to use the behavior strategies and tools provided with their children. Survey responses also indicated that 96% of families believe that their knowledge of behavior principles, including functions and antecedent interventions, improved or greatly improved as a direct result of the training.

The positive family testimonials thus far include: “We are very grateful to have received these services and hope many others can benefit in the same way our family has.”

Total award: \$437,701 (original award) + \$22,676 (award increase) = \$460,377

Expenditures to date: \$328,913

Parent/children pairs projected to be served: 190

Parent/children pairs served to date: 197

### **3. Texas Woman’s University, Speech, Language & Hearing Clinic**

The project aims to train parents to provide language intervention to children diagnosed with ASD to increase reciprocal imitation, the number of verbalizations, the variety of sounds, and words produced by the child.

The project uses a specific treatment approach, “Imitation Therapy” (IT), that has proven successful in clinical settings and trains parents to apply it in a home setting for their children. A major advantage of this approach is that parents/caregivers from diverse linguistic backgrounds can provide intervention in their home language. After receiving appropriate training, the parents will continue to serve as the interventionists. The intervention will be conducted for 30 minutes, five times a week, for a total of two weeks.

The project reports significant positive feedback on how it is benefiting children from all cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Some participating parents have expressed interest in implementing the training received with a comorbidity, such as autism with hearing loss. Although not part of the official project data, it is noteworthy to the project’s progress that participants have reported success with such conditions as well.

Total award: \$450,508 (original award) + \$22,676 (award increase) = \$473,184

Expenditures to date: \$211,082.87

Parent/children pairs projected to be served: 200

Parent/children pairs served to date: 50

### **4. The University of Texas at Austin Speech and Hearing Center**

The goal of the project, Skills and Knowledge of Intervention for Language Learning Success 2.0, is to provide evidence-based parent training to caregivers of autistic children. The project offers five semesters of training in evidence-based intervention for enhancing language skills in young autistic children by meeting the current need for inclusive programs. Specifically, the project includes continuation of existing successful parent-mediated intervention services and creates a new focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion within project services.

Ongoing data shows participants continue to display gains in their receptive and expressive language skills. A positive change in language skills after project participation remains anticipated. Participants indicate that they can give increased attention to their child's communicative acts and feel more comfortable in their responses. They report success with empowering their child to lead, using animation and imitation strategies as they progress through training.

Encouraging written testimonials from participating parents include: “[Child’s name]’s language has really exploded in the last six months and I am incredibly thankful to know how to best support that in a way that made me feel successful too. He’s been counting to 10 and even points to the correct numbers and says them. His teacher told me that they have a PALS student come in there weekly and he told her ‘Goodbye Kate!’ several times. Normally it’s just ‘Bye.’ He has also been saying “no no” a lot more when he doesn’t want something. I’m just so proud of his progress and his hard work and had to send you an update.”

Total award: \$460,683 (original award) + \$22,676 (award increase) = \$483,359

Expenditures to date: \$307,963

Parent/children pairs projected to be served: 400

Parent/children pairs served to date: 229

## **5. The University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley, College of Education, Special Education Research**

The goal of the project is to improve the behavior of children with ASD by providing culturally adapted, evidence-based strategies through a parent-directed training support program for their families.

UTRGV is the second-largest Hispanic-Serving Institution in the United States and in a region that is comprised of over 90% Hispanic individuals. This project partners with 12 school districts that service over 20 cities in South Texas.

Participants have shared that the small group sessions provided them with additional support to apply recently acquired strategies and discuss their coping responses in a safe and judgment-free space. One parent shared the following experience, “the first thing that is most important is the bond, yes... I think that she [parent leader] generated a lot of confidence in me... I think that the simple fact that she can understand me what the mother said is something very wonderful.” Another parent offered a similar experience regarding the structure and support among parent leaders who had firsthand experiences as parents with children who have autism. She shared, “As my teacher and parent leader, it was her that I can say the simple fact that she is the one who put the message almost every day in the group that we have a good morning... You wake up with that power that yes I can do this and I’m not alone. Let’s give it a try and I think it’s also the same because since they also have children who have autism.”

Total award: \$500,000 (original award) + \$22,676 (award increase) = \$522,676

Expenditures to date: \$318,417.10

Parent/children pairs projected to be served: 240

Parent/children pairs served to date: 351

## **6. The University of Texas at San Antonio, Child and Adolescent Policy Research Institute**

Project FIESTA (Family Intervention and Education Services to Treat Autism) aims to serve child-caregiver dyads through a progressive service model, including Brief Outpatient Autism Therapy, and short-term and long-term severe behavior outpatient intervention with caregiver coaching as a pillar of the intervention approach.

When an increase of more severe cases registered for the project, a BCBA was hired to work with the participants in person. To date, 100% of caregivers that have been served through the project have demonstrated mastery in implementing the intervention with their child, and the children that have participated in the project have demonstrated an average of 86.5% decrease in challenging behavior.

Participants communicated with project therapists to provide positive feedback about the grant's services. One family informed project representatives that their personal family advocate asked them to share the names of the project resources they used to decrease their child's problem behavior, given that he was doing so well, and said they wanted to share the project contact information with other clients. Another family stated they were pleased given that their child's crying had decreased to 0% by the end of the study – a substantial difference from the first session. Additionally, a family's teacher emailed the project coordinator for program information to share with her other students' families due to one of her student's parents recommending the project.

Total award: \$500,000 (original award) + \$22,676 (award increase) = \$522,676  
Expenditures to date: \$314,961  
Parent/children pairs projected to be served: 250  
Parent/children pairs served to date: 219

## **7. University of Houston-Clear Lake, Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities**

The project expands the established Parent-directed Treatment program, Connecting the Dots. The goal of the project is to provide communication and behavior management assessment and training to caregivers of individuals diagnosed with ASD. The participants with ASD range in age from 2-18. Participants are referred to the program through various referral sources from the Houston metropolitan area and surrounding counties. Children who have language or social skills deficits and mild-to-moderate problem behavior will be referred to the project based on scheduling availability and proximity. Services are available in person or via telehealth. The goal is to expand the reach of services to a greater number of families.

Services were provided in other locations when family participants shared that they would require assistance to take their son to church as well as other events (e.g., sister's graduation). Project staff joined the family at one event to implement treatment. The family were very thankful this was offered, stating that he had not been able to join them at church since he was much younger. Another client engaged in problem behavior during car rides, which was a dangerous situation for the client and caregiver.

Total award: \$500,000 (original award) + \$22,676 (award increase) = \$522,676

Expenditures to date: \$162,266.25  
Parent/children pairs projected to be served: 190  
Parent/children pairs served to date: 53

## Teacher/Paraprofessional Training

The THECB awarded four grants in the Board-Certified Behavior Analyst Training for the Teachers/Paraprofessionals category:

### 1. Sam Houston State University, Low Incidence Disabilities and Autism Program

The goal of the project is to provide high-quality professional development to special education teachers with ongoing support to improve the quality of instruction provided to children with ASD, leading to better outcomes for children with autism in Texas. The project works collaboratively with regional Educational Service Centers (ESC) to conduct the project.

Recruitment for this project focuses on teachers with less than five years of experience and with positions in Title 1 schools (teachers will not be excluded if they do not fit this criteria) to increase the probability of serving students from diverse backgrounds.

ESC presenters continue to provide positive feedback and show continued interest in participating in the project. ESC Region 11 has led sessions for three consecutive semesters. The ESC Region 12 specialist reported that this project has allowed her to make additional connections with teachers in her region and to gather materials over topics that can be utilized in the future. Many participants have also expressed their gratitude related to the program and resources provided. Participants that reluctantly had to withdraw also expressed the value of the information shared despite unforeseen competing obligations impeding their completion.

Total award: \$359,000  
Expenditures to date: \$168,290  
Children projected to be served: 1,800  
Children served to date: 1,141  
Teachers projected to be served: 180  
Teachers served to date: 86

### 2. Texas State University, The Clinic for Autism Research, Evaluation, and Support

The goal of the project is to provide Board-Certified Behavior Analyst Training for teachers. The project formed partnerships with five diverse counties/school districts: (1) Round Rock, (2) Pflugerville, (3) San Marcos, (4) Comal ISD, and (5) La Verna ISD. Trainees are learning to implement focused Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) interventions.

After completing the project that included incorporation of an iPad for intervention and data collection, a teacher participant successfully secured additional iPads for her classroom via a non-related grant to persist in delivering the project's behavioral intervention and extend the intervention to more students with ASD. Teachers have actively engaged in recruiting their colleagues to participate in the training program, with past participants referring new ones. This is evidence of the social validity and acceptability of the project's approach to training and teachers' perception of the outcomes of training as beneficial. Teacher participants have reported extending the project's impact by training the parents of their students, empowering

parents to play an active role in supporting their children's development. This collaborative effort between teachers and parents displays the practicality and effectiveness of the training program in fostering a holistic and inclusive approach to education.

The positive reception and effectiveness of the training program are evident through the proactive actions taken by the administration at project partner schools, given their initiative to share project information with other school districts. This word-of-mouth endorsement sparked interest and garnered attention from other school districts, empowering them to approach project representatives to join the project. The positive reception and effectiveness of the project are evident through the initiative-taking actions taken by the administration at project partner schools.

The project is progressing as planned and expected to exceed the original project goal by having served more than the projected number of children at a lower than initially estimated cost per child.

Total award: \$312,000 (original award) + \$22,795 (award increase) = \$334,795

Expenditures to date: \$239,815.30

Children projected to be served: 1,150

Children served to date: 1,489

Teachers projected to be served: 120

Teachers served to date: 56

### **3. The University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio Applied Behavior Analysis Research Consortium**

The goal of the project is to help teachers become BCBAs and incorporate ABA into their teaching practices and classroom management. The project aims to recruit 10 diverse teacher participants who reflect the population of San Antonio, which is 65% Hispanic. For the child participants in the project (not including those participating from the teachers' classrooms), recruitment is achieved through community partnership with the Autism Treatment Center, which provides services to diverse populations. Additionally, recruitment information is disseminated via flyers through other ABAs at UTSA community partnerships, including local ABA clinics, school districts, the Children's Hospital of San Antonio, and the Multi-Assistance Center at Morgan's Wonderland™, all of which are located in San Antonio and service a variety of diverse populations around the city, as well as through social media.

The program team completed a comprehensive training using behavior skills training on key areas for supporting children with autism that the teachers will then implement in the classroom. Future reporting will provide graphing data to illustrate teacher outcomes for implementing the interventions within their classroom.

Total award: \$400,000 (original award) + \$22,795 (award increase) = \$422,795

Expenditures to date: \$192,642

Children projected to be served: 1,050

Children served to date: 864

Teachers projected to be served: 10

Teachers served to date: 10

#### **4. University of Houston-Clear Lake, Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities**

The project goal is to increase the number of Texas school teachers who are prepared to provide evidence-based ABA approaches in classrooms that serve students with ASD and related disorders. The project will train teachers who serve students with ASD by providing initial cross-district group training, with added opportunities to experience more in-depth training with 1:1 flexible meeting time scheduled by teachers at their convenience. Training will afford teachers the knowledge of basic ABA strategies shown to be effective in helping students with ASD learn in school and classroom environments. Teachers who work in greater-Houston areas as well as rural and underserved Texas school districts located beyond driving distance of the University of Houston-Clear Lake are targeted for recruitment. The inclusion of virtual training options assists with recruiting and serving a greater number of diverse, underserved areas of the state.

Given that certified teachers now serve in mentorship, leadership, and coaching positions within their district, the numbers of students who are provided instruction or support is higher than those who teach exclusively in self-contained classrooms.

Positive comments demonstrating project success that are provided by teacher and paraprofessional training completers include: "Solid information - more teachers need to know. I am entering this school year with more confidence and a bag of extremely useful tools gathered from this training; I have already reached out to several peers to ensure they sign up for the next training. It elaborated and identified the importance of the function of the behavior and not the behavior itself when determining strategies and plans for behavior replacement. Being able to identify behaviors, track them, and determine what is causing them and replace them with a positive behavior. It helped me to look at behavior in a different manner and learn new ways to efficiently collect data to help aid in correcting behaviors. The training gave the teachers so much more knowledge and strategies to use with difficult situations in the class. It also allowed them to go back and 'revisit' what they were currently doing, break it down, look for the cause, and find a viable solution. Excellent training!!! I really wish more from our district would have attended."

Total award: \$400,000 (original award) + \$22,795 (award increase) = \$422,795

Expenditures to date: \$288,365.66

Children projected to be served: 1,020

Children served to date: 2,093

Teachers projected to be served: 204

Teachers served to date: 231

#### **Innovative Treatment Models**

The THECB awarded three grants in the Research, Development, and Evaluation of Innovative Autism Treatment Models category:

##### **1. Baylor College of Medicine with Texas Children's Hospital Neurological Research Institute**

Developing effective treatments for anxiety and depression is a top priority for adolescents with ASD, as these disorders contribute to suicidality, family stress, and social impairment. Research in typically developing youth has shown that transdiagnostic cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) has broader and more durable benefits than disorder-specific CBT and can be more easily learned by community clinicians. Given the minimal efforts to develop transdiagnostic interventions for anxiety and depression in adolescents with ASD, this population is at higher risk for suicide, more complex clinical presentations, and poorer outcomes as they transition into adulthood without effective treatments. The project directly addresses this service gap by building off evidence-based practice in typically developing adolescents to develop and test streamlined, transdiagnostic CBT for anxiety and depression in adolescents with ASD.

Parent participant feedback has been positive: “My son participated in your study over the summer. It has completely changed his whole trajectory. He uses his tools daily. He struggles from time to time but he has not had a panic attack since May! My daughter has learned so much from the sessions and is putting the learned skills to work daily. School is going well so far. It is like night and day from the last time we were doing in person school!”

Total award: \$833,147 (original award) + \$29,462 (award increase) = \$862,609

Expenditures to date: \$273,667

Children projected to be served: 112

Children served to date: 51

## **2. Baylor University, Baylor Center for Developmental Disabilities**

The goal of the project is to develop a service model in which siblings of children with autism are invited to collaborate and participate as vital members of intervention teams. The project provides three levels of training and support related to including siblings within behavioral interventions. Level 1 is an extended program targeting the reduction of challenging behavior and the increase of prosocial behaviors. Level 2 is a four-week program promoting positive interactions between siblings. And Level 3 will be a one-day workshop to teach siblings to use basic behavioral tools to enhance the quality of interactions with their siblings with autism. In addition to these direct services, a professional development workshop on collaborating with siblings with 60 practitioners working with children with autism will also transpire through the project.

Total award: \$893,410 (original award) + \$29,462 (award increase) = \$922,872

Expenditures to date: \$50,273

Children projected to be served: 125

Children served to date: 0

## **3. The University of Texas at Dallas, Callier Center for Communications Disorders**

This project builds on and extends previous AGP-funded UTD research. The project goal is to evaluate the efficacy of the entire Pathways program on: (a) the development of social orienting, joint attention, and social language in autistic children; and (b) relieving their parents' stress. Recruitment of families is conducted through local infant-toddler programs, community centers, advocacy groups, physicians' offices, social media, and past participant

referrals. Many of the community referral sources serve low-income Hispanic children and their families (e.g., Catholic Charities, The Lumin Bachman Lake Community School, and Center for Children and Families). Community referral sources that serve low-income Hispanic children with quarterly in-service training on the signs and symptoms of autism, how to screen children for autism, how to talk to parents about autism, and the necessity of early intervention will be provided by project clinicians. Inherent in executing/implementing the project, it aims to simultaneously minimize cultural, economic, and social barriers to clinical care for Hispanic autistic children in families experiencing low income.

Total award: \$854,000 (original award) + \$29,462 (award increase) = \$883,462

Expenditures to date: \$164,141

Children projected to be served: 150

Children served to date: 10

Fiscal Years 2024-2025 awards will be announced in summer 2024. The THECB maintains information about the AGP online at [www.highered.texas.gov/agp](http://www.highered.texas.gov/agp).

## Appendix A: Annual Reporting Requirement

### General Appropriations Act for the 2024-25 Biennium, 88th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2023. Article IX – General Provisions, Health-Related Provisions.

#### Section 10.05. Funding for Autism Services. (IX-59).

(a) Appropriated elsewhere in this Act for autism services is \$21,073,084 in General Revenue Funds for the 2024-25 biennium, which is allocated to the following agencies for the following purposes:

(1) Health and Human Services Commission: General Revenue Funds totaling \$13,663,084 for the biennium for focused Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) treatment services. This amount does not include funding provided for autism services within Goal A, Medicaid Client Services.

(2) Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB): General Revenue Funds totaling \$7,410,000 for the 2024-25 biennium to distribute to autism research centers at institutions of higher education that currently provide evidence-based behavioral services and training, in the amounts and for the purposes as follows:

(A) Parent-directed Treatment: \$2,055,000 per fiscal year to serve 750 children per year;

(B) Board-certified Behavioral Analyst (BCBA) Training for Teachers/Paraprofessionals: \$950,000 per fiscal year to serve 2,547 children per year. The research centers may contract with educational service centers to provide this training;

(C) Research, development, and evaluation of innovative autism treatment models: \$700,000 per fiscal year;

(D) Administrative support of the programs in Subsections (a)(2)(A) through (a)(2)(C): \$150,000 per fiscal year may be expended by the THECB;

(E) If monies appropriated under Subsections (a)(2)(A),(B), or (C) exceed the monies that can be expended in accordance with the requirements of that subsection, THECB may expend the excess monies on any purpose described in Subsections (a)(2)(A), (B) or (C); and

(F) Any unexpended balances on hand at the end of fiscal year 2024 are appropriated for the same purpose for fiscal year 2025.

(b) THECB shall gather data on the above programs from each institution's autism research center and submit an annual report on the effectiveness of each program, including the number of children served, the number of parents and/or teachers/paraprofessionals trained, and the results of the research on innovative treatment models. The report shall be submitted no later than September 1 of each year to the Legislative Budget Board, Office of the Governor, the chair of the House Appropriations Committee, chair of the Senate Finance Committee, speaker of the House, and lieutenant governor.

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