

**Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism Legislative Report  
FY2024**

## **Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism Providers**

University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS), DNEA Partner Autism Delaware (AD), DNEA Partner

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## Who We Are

### **The Blueprint for Collective Action**

In 2013, Delaware published its Strategic Plan to Improve Services and Supports for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, referred to as the *Blueprint for Collective Action* (“the Blueprint”). The Blueprint is the result of a two-year comprehensive community needs assessment and planning process, with information gathered from and discussed among family members, people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), providers and professionals, and other community members.

The Blueprint outlines important recommendations for the state categorized into seven Improvement Areas. These recommendations are designed to address the ongoing needs of infants, children, youth, and adults with autism and their families living in Delaware.

As a means to accomplish these recommendations, stakeholders collectively endorsed two systemic activities: (1) an autism resource center; and (2) an executive group of state-decision makers and parents.

In 2016, under the leadership of Senator Margaret Rose Henry and Representative Earl Jaques Jr., Delaware Senate Bill 93 (SB93) was passed. It resulted in the creation of the Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism (DNEA) and the Interagency Committee on Autism (ICA).

### **The Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism**

The DNEA is the state’s autism training and technical assistance center and is led by the University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS). The DNEA provides training and support to professionals and organizations, as well as autistic individuals and their families.

The DNEA leverages interdisciplinary expertise to ensure all Delawareans with autism and their families have access to high-quality services and evidence-based care across the lifespan. The DNEA offers training and support to professionals and families in a variety of ways. For example, the DNEA offers large-scale statewide trainings; tailored workshops and technical assistance to meet specific organizational needs; and targeted support provided through webinars or onsite coaching. Further, the DNEA coordinates its spending plan and programmatic initiatives with the Autism Resources Workgroup (formally Delaware Statewide Autism Programs) within the Delaware Department of Education in order to avoid duplicative programming and ensure improved outcomes for Delawareans with autism and their families.

By establishing a network, the DNEA utilizes additional expertise and resources from ICA members and local, regional, and national experts to offer far-reaching, impactful support for all community members.

## **The Interagency Committee on Autism**

The ICA is composed of key stakeholders within the Delaware autism community. It includes 14 different state agencies and community organizations, a parent/caregiver from each county, and a person with autism. The DNEA Principal Investigator - Sarah Mallory - serves as the Administrative Chair of the ICA and facilitates the coordination of ICA meetings, reporting, and activities.

The ICA leverages resources across member organizations and agencies to develop coordinated approaches to implementing improvements outlined in the Blueprint. The ICA identifies gaps or overlaps in services, is available to advise the Delaware General Assembly on recommendations for legislation, and oversees the development of goals and priorities for the DNEA.

## **Why We Matter**

The Centers for Disease Control reports 1 in 36 children is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD; Maenner et al., 2023). Individuals with autism may face difficulties learning, communicating, and managing stress. However, the greater challenge is often living in a world that lacks the awareness and tools to effectively support autistic people and their families. People with autism are more likely to experience additional health and mental health concerns than the general population and often face barriers to accessing employment, transportation, community activities, health care services, and other services that support their day-to-day living needs (Roux, et al., 2017).

The Interagency Committee on Autism (ICA) and the Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism (DNEA) are the only entities of their kind in the state that are working to address roadblocks in providing high-quality care to all Delawareans with autism in an efficient, coordinated, and person-centered manner.

With an increasing prevalence of autism and a clear demonstration of the need for continued support, the DNEA has become a critical provider of large-scale and wide-spread training, technical assistance, coaching, and support for families and professionals in the state of Delaware. The DNEA's work ensures the state is equipped to provide high-quality services and evidence-based care to autistic people and their families by empowering professionals to work with and support children and adults on the spectrum.

## **Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism (DNEA) Activities**

The following section reports on the activities of the Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism (DNEA) between October 1, 2023 and September 30, 2024. **During this contract period, the DNEA touched 13,459 Delaware residents and professionals through its training, technical assistance, and information dissemination activities.**

Overviews of these initiatives are organized into three sections, which align with our program goals: (1) Training and Technical Assistance; (2) Information Dissemination and Community Outreach; and (3) Facilitation of the ICA. Each section includes a summary of FY2024 DNEA activities by describing the scope of the initiatives and evidence of meeting project goals.

Associated *Blueprint for Collective Action* improvement area(s) and DNEA network partner(s) and subcontractor(s) associated with the work are noted.

**Goal 1: Training and Technical Assistance**

*Provide training and technical assistance to agencies, organizations, and other professional groups who support children and adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), as well as to those who are directly impacted by ASD (i.e., individuals with autism and their families).*

Objectives:

- A. Facilitate a process for stakeholders and other community members to identify and request training needs from the DNEA.*
- B. Conduct a wide range of training activities on autism-related topics across the lifespan to diverse groups of agencies, organizations, professionals, and families.*
- C. Offer targeted training, coaching, and technical assistance aligned with specific organizations’ level of need, field of work, and population of individuals with ASD who they support.*
- D. Provide technical assistance services to families via family navigation.*
- E. Deliver high-quality training activities that promote research-based, culturally competent, non-ableist, and person- and family-centered practices.*
- F. Evaluate the effectiveness of training activities in order to inform future trainings and technical assistance.*

The DNEA provided direct training and technical assistance to **1,687 professionals** in FY2024. Of those participants, **97% reported that they were satisfied** with the training activity and between **96% and 98% reported knowledge gain** following their completion of the training activities. These trainings covered a wide range of autism-related topics across the lifespan and targeted diverse groups of agencies, organizations, professionals, and families. DNEA trainings address *Blueprint for Collective Action* Improvement Area 2 (Training and Technical Assistance) and are developed and led by University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS) DNEA staff.

DNEA trainings are also designed to serve diverse audiences from a range of backgrounds and with different degrees of expertise. Table 1 provides a summary of the groups of individuals the DNEA served in FY2024. Of note, the DNEA does not serve public school professionals, as that is the focus of work by the Autism Resources Workgroup within the Delaware Department of Education.

**Table 1**  
*Types of Professionals Served by the DNEA*

- Autistic Delawareans	- Healthcare providers	- Crisis response staff
- Family members	- Dental providers	- Human & social services
- First responders	- Early childhood professionals	- Researchers & academics
- Childcare providers	- Vocational rehabilitation	- Advocacy groups
- Mental health providers	- Faith-based organizations	- Other interested community
- Medical and dental providers	- Emergency preparedness staff	members

The hallmark of DNEA trainings is that they focus on building the capacity of Delaware

professionals to understand and implement evidence-based practices. Appendix A provides a summary of the DNEA’s most frequently offered trainings and the evidence-based practices that are addressed within each training session. The table includes an abstract of each training, its FY2024 training satisfaction rating by attendees, and the evidence-based practices addressed in each workshop.

The DNEA’s activities have also gained the attention of several news media outlets and the governor’s office. Of note, the DNEA was recognized by the Governor’s office for its trauma-informed work with first responders and received the state’s [\*Compassionate Champion Award\*](#). The award was presented on behalf of the Family Services Cabinet Council, Trauma Matters Delaware, and the Office of Governor Carney to recognize exceptional trauma-informed care provided by individuals and organizations in Delaware. The award acknowledged that a first responder who is sensitive and understands the nature of autism is better equipped to bring about positive changes for individuals with autism and their families

In addition to regularly offered trainings, the DNEA also responds to community training requests. These training activities are tailored to the target agency or organization and often include follow up technical assistance and coaching. Table 2 summarizes the training requests that the DNEA fulfilled during its FY2024 contract. In total, the DNEA trained 794 Delaware professionals through its targeted training activities; the table summarizes the total number of professionals trained per category.

**Table 2**  
*Community Training Requests*

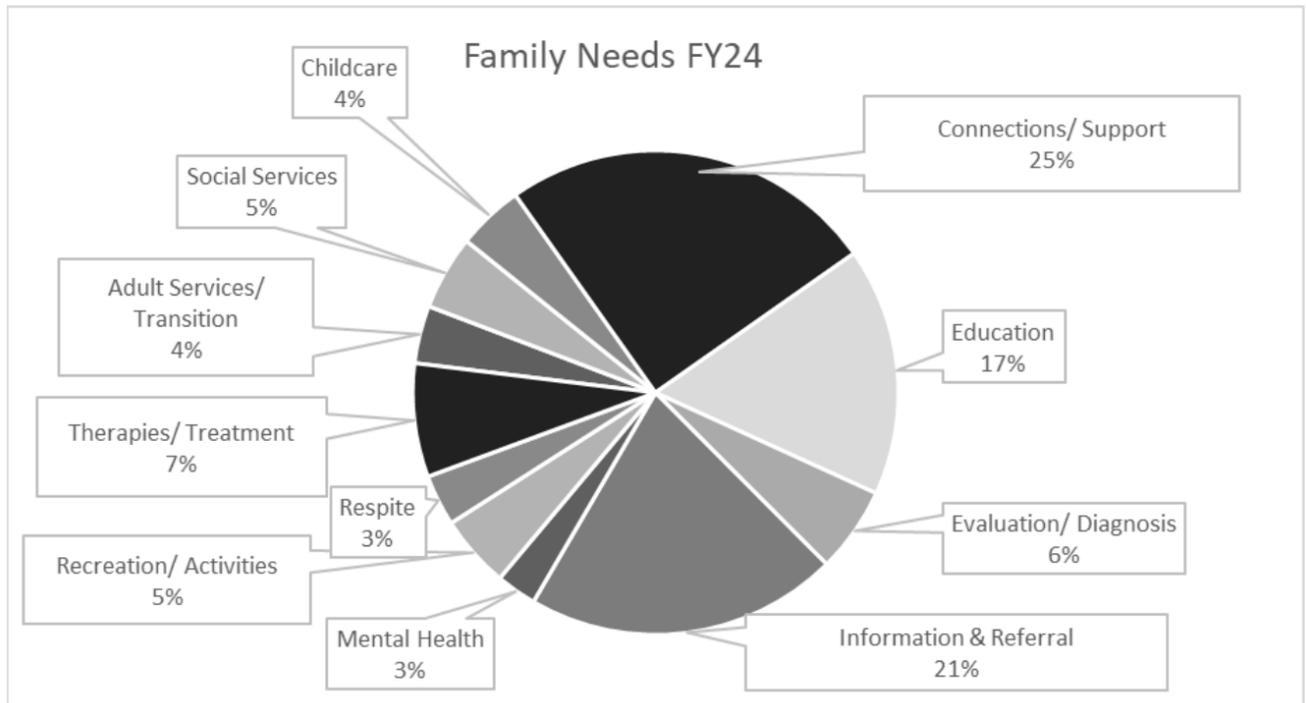
<b>First Responders (n=243)</b>		
-Millcreek Volunteer Fire Company	-Del Tech Constable Academy	-Delaware State Police Academy
-Delaware Natural Resources Police	-Middletown PD	-Delaware Health and Social Services
-Wilmington PD	-Delaware National Alliance on Mental Illness	
<b>Family Supports and Services (n=266)</b>		
-Jewish Family Services	-Division of Family Services in Kent and Sussex Counties	-Division of Family Services in New Castle County
<b>Early Childhood Settings (n=218)</b>		
-Delaware Technical Community College Nursing Department	-Blossom & Bloom Early Learning Center	-Woodbridge Early Childhood Education Center (WECEC)
-New Castle Head Start	-Cadence Academy Preschool	- Kind Mind Kids
-DIEEC Family Child Care Providers in Kent, New Castle, and Sussex counties	-Boys and Girls Club of Wilmington	-Grow and Learn Center
<b>Other Groups (n=29)</b>		
-Community Integrated Services	-Pediatric Health Choice	-Spectrum Scholars
-Winterthur Museum		

In FY2024, ongoing technical assistance was provided for two initiatives that launched in the FY2023 and focused on early identification and treatment of young children with autism. The first focused on the long waitlists individuals in Delaware encounter when seeking an autism diagnosis. To address this need, the DNEA hosted two three-day autism evaluation training series in FY2023. These trainings focused on best practices for administering the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS-2), an evidence-based tool for diagnosing autism. In October of FY24, the DNEA offered a one-day virtual, 8-hour Advanced Training Workshop on the ADOS-2, focusing on advanced techniques and report writing. This workshop was attended by 24 participants who had previously completed one of the three-day ADOS-2 training. The ADOS-2 technical assistance activities addressed *Blueprint for Collective Action* Improvement Area 1 (Identification, Diagnosis, and Classification) and was provided by CDS DNEA staff and a DNEA contracted trainer, Dr. Norman Geller.

The second technical assistance activity focused on parent support. In FY2023, the DNEA provided training and technical assistance to a targeted group of providers on the caregiver coaching program, *Project ImPACT*. This program teaches providers how to coach parents and caregivers in using strategies to promote their children's development of social, communication, imitation, and play skills. Participants who completed the program received ongoing technical assistance through FY2024 to help them integrate the program into their practices. In FY2024, eight providers were supported through four reoccurring technical assistance meetings that addressed clinical and organizational challenges, treatment fidelity, and sustainability. The Project ImPACT technical assistance activities addressed *Blueprint for Collective Action* Improvement Area 1 (Identification, Diagnosis, and Classification) and were provided by a DNEA-contracted trainer, Katherine Pickard.

Finally, a portion of DNEA funds were used to support the provision of family navigation services through a subcontract with Autism Delaware. In FY2024, Autism Delaware had **2,396 family navigation contacts** with family members of Delawareans with autism. Figure 1 provides an overview of the family needs that were addressed during these family navigation contacts. A summary of these activities can be found in Appendix B. The Family Navigation program addresses the *Blueprint for Collective Action* Improvement Area 6 (Family Support and Stakeholder engagement) and was conducted by Autism Delaware staff.

**Figure 1**  
*Family needs addressed during Family Navigation calls*



***New Programs and Collaborations***

The DNEA engaged in several new training and technical assistance activities in FY2024. These included: (a) developing and leading a practice traffic stop program; and (b) contributing to two statewide capacity-building initiatives addressing supported-decision making and mental health training. These new initiatives addressed *Blueprint for Collective Action* Area 2 (Training and Technical Assistance), Improvement Area 4 (Self Determination, Self-advocacy and Social Network Development), and Improvement Area 7 (Systems Coordination); these activities were conducted by CDS DNEA staff and community partners.

**Practice Traffic Stop Program.** In FY2024, the DNEA launched its new practice traffic stop program. This program was designed to provide autistic drivers and passengers the opportunity to work with police in a safe and supportive environment to practice a live traffic stop. Prior to the event, participants were provided with a suite of evidence-based resources that explained the steps of a routine traffic stop. Then participants attended a practice traffic stop event, where they drove their vehicles in a closed parking lot and replicated a routine traffic stop with an officer.

FY2024, the DNEA hosted two of these events with Delaware State Parks, Delaware Natural Resources Police (DNREC) and New Castle City Police. Twenty-five people attended the events, which were conducted at Lums Pond and Cape Henlopen State Park, respectively. The October Cape Henlopen State Park driving event was the [WRDE CoastTV 11 pm news lead story](#) and was featured in a [news article](#).

The *Practice Traffic Stop Program* is continuing in FY2025 and offers a comprehensive suite of resources, which are provided free of charge on the DNEA website:

- 1) *What to Do During a Traffic Stop, Car Accident, or Breakdown: A Video for Autistic Drivers and Passengers* is a 10-minute video to support autistic drivers and passengers during routine interactions with the police. It uses the evidence-based practices of task analysis and video modeling to outline what to do when being pulled over by the police or when experiencing a car accident or breakdown. Drivers and passengers who sign up for the practice traffic stop session are encouraged to watch the video beforehand to help prepare for the experience.
- 2) *Talking to a Police Officer About My Autism* was created in collaboration with the Delaware DMV and helps autistic people decide whether to tell a police officer or first responder that they have autism. It provides information about the DNEA's *About My Autism Card* and explains how to denote an autism diagnosis on a driver's license or state identification card.
- 3) *About My Autism Card* is a fillable card that an autistic person can use to disclose their autism diagnosis with a first responder or police officer. The card includes guidance to help a person decide what they might share with an officer.
- 4) *What to Do During a Traffic Stop or Car Crash* is a written resource guide that explains the steps to follow when being pulled over by the police or when experiencing a car accident or breakdown.
- 5) *Auto Document Envelope* is a robust glovebox envelope intended to house the above resources. It includes a space for drivers to identify their disability, share their emergency contact information, and provide their health care information.

Pilot data, as summarized in Table 3 indicates a high degree of participant satisfaction with the practice traffic stop and related resources.

**Table 3**  
*Practice Traffic Stop Post-Event Satisfaction Survey (n=25)*

Evaluation item	Percent who “agreed” or “strongly agreed”
The pre-driving video and resources helped me/us prepare for today's practice driving session	100%
What I learned today was helpful	100%
Overall, I am satisfied with my/our experience in the practice driving session with the police	100%

**Capacity-building Initiatives: Supported Decision-making Summit and Mental Health Training.** The DNEA also significantly contributed to two major initiatives within the University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies.

The first was the *My Life. My Decisions: A Supported Decision-making Summit*. This initiative, which was led by the Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS) and funded by the Delaware Developmental Disability Council (DDC), included a partnership with the DNEA and Delaware's Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disabilities (LEND)

program. The DNEA contributed to planning and leading a statewide event and subsequent health promotion initiative, which were designed to improve awareness and access to supported decision-making tools and resources in Delaware.

The event was held on March 7, 2024 and included two components: (1) a panel discussion of people with disabilities; and (2) professional development and self-determination mentoring breakout activities. The goal of the Summit was to provide people with disabilities, caregivers, and professionals in the state of Delaware with information and resources about self-determination and supported decision-making. DNEA staff contributed to planning event activities, developing evidence-based technical assistance resources, and leading event activities. Following the summit, the [DNEA designed a webpage](#) with a recording of the event and accompanying health promotion materials that can be used to increase the community's understanding of supported decision-making in Delaware.

One-hundred eighty-three people attended the hybrid event. Of those who responded to the post-event survey (n=123), 32% identified as having a disability; 39% identified as being a family member, parent, and/or caregiver; and 74% of were professionals in the state who serves people with disabilities (note some respondents had intersecting identities). Following the event, most respondents reported they had a strong understanding of topic areas such as self-determination (94%) and supported decision-making agreements (82%), with 97% reporting they were satisfied with the event overall.

The second collaborative initiative focused on the mental health of individuals with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities. With funding from the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH), CDS was contracted to lead three activities: (a) a qualitative study to understand mental health and IDD in Delaware; (b) the development of a suite of mental health trainings and resources for professionals; and (c) the construction of family-friendly resources explaining mental health systems in Delaware.

DNEA staff supported the development of the suite of professional resources, which included eight unique trainings, four discipline-specific curricula, and 12 evidence-based resource guides. These professional resources are now part of the DNEA's library of training and technical assistance resources and can be accessed on the [DNEA website](#). Trainings have launched as part of DNEA's FY2025 activities.

## **Goal 2: Information Dissemination and Community Outreach**

*Maintain an informed community by developing and disseminating information and resources about evidence-based practices and issues that impact people with ASD, their families, professionals, and organizations.*

### Objectives:

- A. *Develop and maintain a website that:*
  - *offers public visibility to the mission and activities of the DNEA;*
  - *enhances community members' understanding and knowledge of ASD, evidence-based practices, and available services and supports in Delaware;*
  - *supports the training and technical assistance needs of professionals,*

*organizations, and families by offering an easy process for making training requests;*

- *shows upcoming opportunities to participate in DNEA trainings and events; and*
- *tracks progress on attaining the goals of Delaware's strategic plan for services to people with autism and their families.*

*B. Develop web-based and print-based resources that support a greater understanding of evidence-based practices, types of autism services, and available supports in Delaware and the surrounding region.*

*C. Design digital and printed materials and resources in an accessible format with multiple, diverse audiences in mind.*

In addition to its training and technical assistance activities in Goal 1, the DNEA has also been successful in developing digital and print professional development resources to disseminate to the community. In FY2024, **9,316 resources were disseminated statewide**. The DNEA's outreach work addresses *Blueprint for Collective Action* Improvement Area 6 (Family Support and Stakeholder engagement) and Area 2 (Training and Technical Assistance); these activities were carried out by CDS DNEA staff.

The DNEA monthly newsletter serves as an effective method of raising awareness of DNEA activities. It has grown to 1,383 subscribers, which represents a **33% increase from FY2023**. The newsletter advertises DNEA trainings, disseminates new DNEA professional development resources, and provides the community with updates about autism-related topics. It also drives readers to the DNEA website.

The DNEA website serves as a hub of information that is updated monthly to inform the public about current projects and training opportunities. Training participants can register for activities via the [DNEA online training calendar](#) or by submitting a training request using the [DNEA's online request form](#). In FY2024, the website was expanded to include information that is specific for families, self-advocates, and professionals. This includes a [provider list for families](#), self-advocate resources, and a robust library of professional development content. Of note, Delawareans can order paper copies of DNEA resources free of charge using the DNEA's online ordering system. The website receives thousands of views each month. For example, in June 2024 there were 1,725 unique website sessions with 2,834 page views.

The DNEA produced and published **2 new training videos** and **11 new resource guides** that were professionally designed to be Section 508 compliant and accessible to all viewers. This expanded the DNEA library of resources to include 20 training videos, which received **1,895 views in FY2024**, and 28 resource guides, which were **disseminated to 4,000 Delaware professionals and families in FY2024**. Resources that may be beneficial to families are translated into Spanish and Haitian-Creole.

Like DNEA's training content, DNEA's information dissemination activities focus on the implementation of evidence-based practices. Appendix C provides a summary of the digital and print resources the DNEA developed and disseminated in FY2024, noting the evidence-based practices addressed within each type of resource.

### **Goal 3: Facilitation of the ICA**

*Facilitate the Interagency Committee for Autism (ICA) to ensure continued progress by the committee on meeting the goals outlined in Delaware's strategic plan for services to people with autism and their families*

#### Objectives:

- A. Ensure that the ICA maintains representation from all agencies and other parties that were identified in Senate Bill 93.*
- B. Facilitate regular meetings of the ICA and its identified subcommittees and workgroups, as needed.*
- C. Maintain information about the ICA on the DNEA website, support the development of the committee's reports, and collect and disseminate minutes of ICA meetings.*

The DNEA facilitated the ICA in conducting meetings in November 2023, March 2024, May 2024, July 2024, and September 2025. Quorum was met at all meetings and included representation from state agencies, the Nemours Swank Autism Center, parent advocacy groups, family members from each county, and other entities that serve autistic individuals, as outlined by SB93. All meetings were published on the [DNEA event calendar](#) and promoted on the state's public meeting calendar. Additionally, the DNEA maintained a [webpage](#) highlighting the ICA's membership, [meeting minutes](#), and ICA resources

## **DNEA Operations**

Since re-establishing its funding in FY22, the DNEA was able to re-staff all major positions, relaunch and update its website, re-establish its listserv, and establish a second office location so DNEA had a presence upstate (Newark) and downstate (Milford). The following section will provide an overview of DNEA staffing and program expenses.

### **DNEA Staffing**

The DNEA had five primary staff members supporting its initiatives during its FY2024 contract.

Dr. Sarah Mallory (19%) served as the DNEA's principal investigator and provided conceptual leadership to DNEA activities. As a special education faculty member at the University of Delaware, Dr. Mallory also served as the lead on any education-related activities and provided leadership on program evaluation activities.

Dr. Alisha Fletcher (85%) served as Director of the DNEA. Dr. Fletcher is a clinical social worker by training and provided general, day-to-day leadership to DNEA activities. In collaboration with Dr. Mallory, Dr. Fletcher provided supervision to all DNEA staff, prioritized work plan activities, and served as lead on activities related to mental health and social services.

Ms. Katherine Booze (100%) served as program coordinator for the DNEA. Ms. Booze brings a rich background in disability studies and supported coordinating all aspects of DNEA's day-to-day activities.

Ms. Emily Curtin worked with the DNEA from 10/23/24 to 3/15/24 (aggregate FTE: 32%). She was a school psychologist by training and provided expertise in transition and adult supports for individuals with autism.

Ms. Nicole Ferrara joined the DNEA 8/19/2024 (aggregate FTE: 12%). She is a special educator by training and provided expertise in a wide range of topics, including the translation of evidence-based practices to different settings.

DNEA training and technical assistance activities were also supported by several hourly and part-time trainers and coaches. Ms. Ashley Steinbrecher supported the DNEA as a coach and content developer. Ms. Steinbrecher has a master's degree in health promotion and intellectual and developmental disabilities and she provided leadership to all health promotion-related content. Mr. Charles Sawchenko, a retired state trooper, social worker, and parent of an autistic daughter, was an hourly staff member and supported the development of first responder training initiatives. Ms. Nicole Garrity, a school psychologist, was also an hourly staff member and supported statewide training activities and early childhood initiatives.

In addition to part-time trainers and coaches, the DNEA was also provided part-time hourly graphic design support from Ms. Shirlinda "Angel" Tucker in order to ensure all content was professional and accessible.

Finally, the DNEA strategically partners with subcontractors to broaden its collective expertise.

These contractors are hired on an as-needed basis and are noted in our reported activities. As described in the original legislation creating the DNEA, Autism Delaware has a subcontract for offering family navigation services.

**DNEA Financial Report (FY2024)**

In FY2024, the DNEA was awarded \$575,000 via a contract that began on October 1, 2023 and ended on September 30, 2024. A summary of the FY2024 financial report can be found in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*DNEA Financial Report (FY2024)*

<b>Account Category</b>	<b>Expenses</b>
Personnel	\$ 335,755.69
Travel & conferences	\$ 7,421.33
Training supplies & expenses	\$ 14,594.75
Printing	\$ 20,472.70
Professional speaker fees	\$ 3,500
Sub-awards	\$ 86,174.30
Overhead	\$ 106,990.86
<b>Total \$ 574,909.63<sup>1</sup></b>	

<sup>1</sup>Please note that due to a fringe adjustment at the conclusion of the award, a small amount of funds (\$90.37) was not spent.

**Summary and Next Steps**

Autism spectrum disorder remains a critical public health issue, with the CDC recently reporting an increased prevalence rate of 1 in 36. Years of stakeholder discussions in Delaware identified a lack of expertise in autism among almost all professional groups. In response, Senate Bill 93 established the DNEA to enhance Delaware’s state- and system-wide capacity to improve outcomes across the lifespan for individuals with autism through high quality, evidence-based technical assistance and training for professionals and families.

In FY2024, the DNEA was able to significantly expand the breadth and depth of its training, technical assistance, and resources available to the community by touching over 13,000 Delawareans and Delaware professionals with its evidence-based supports. This represents over a 33% increase from FY2023 and more recipients any other year since DNEA’s establishment. The demand for DNEA trainings and resources continues to grow.

Now more than ever, our state needs professionals who understand autism and who can confidently implement scientifically-based interventions. There is more work to be done. The

DNEA was refunded in FY2025 and has resubmitted an application to the Health Fund Advisory Council (HFAC) for funding in FY2026. We are eager to continue this important work.

## References

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## Appendixes

### Appendix A: DNEA Statewide Training Activities and Associated Evidence-based Practices

<b>Introductory Trainings</b>	
<b>Training Name, Abstract, and Feedback Score<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Evidence-based Practices Addressed</b>
<p><b>Introduction to Autism</b>  <i>Introduction to Autism will provide a basic overview of autism. This training will include content about disability-friendly language, the history of autism, core characteristics of autism, and general tips and considerations when supporting people with autism.</i></p> <p><b>Training Satisfaction= 100%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Visual Cues</li> <li>-Visual Schedules</li> <li>-Visual Timers</li> <li>-Visual Boundaries</li> <li>-Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Introduction to Evidence-Based Practices for Supporting Individuals with Autism</b>  <i>Introduction to Evidence-Based Practices for Individuals with Autism will provide an overview of the evidence-based practices that are most effective when supporting individuals with autism of all ages. This training will review the core characteristics of autism and introduce three evidence-based practices: visual supports, prompting, and reinforcement.</i></p> <p><b>Training Satisfaction= 100%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Visual Timers</li> <li>-Visual Schedules</li> <li>-Visual Boundaries</li> <li>-Visual Cues</li> <li>-Environmental Labeling</li> <li>-Choice Boards</li> <li>-Visual Task Analyses</li> <li>-Prompting</li> <li>-Reinforcement</li> <li>-Modeling</li> <li>-Video Modeling</li> </ul>
<p><b>Introduction to Visual Supports</b>  <i>This training will provide an overview of the evidence-based practice of visual supports for individuals with autism. Participants will learn about the four different types of visual supports - schedules, cues, boundaries, and timers - and evidence-based practices for introducing these supports to individuals with autism. Participants should have a foundational understanding of autism and/or previously attended Introduction to Autism.</i></p> <p><b>Training Satisfaction= 100%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Visual Timers</li> <li>-Visual Schedules</li> <li>-Visual Boundaries</li> <li>-Visual Cues</li> <li>-Environmental Labeling</li> <li>-Choice Boards</li> <li>-Visual Task Analyses</li> <li>-Prompting</li> <li>-Reinforcement</li> <li>-Modeling</li> <li>-Video Modeling</li> </ul>
<p><b>Planning The Perfect Summer [Fall] [Winter]: Supporting Your Child During New Activities and Special Events</b>  <i>While the summer can be fun and exciting, it can also be difficult for youth with autism and other developmental or intellectual disabilities. This workshop, presented to you by the DNEA, will review why the summer and its special events can be particularly challenging for children with disabilities and their families or caregivers. We also present strategies that can assist in preparing for special or new events while reducing stress and challenging behaviors.</i></p> <p><b>Training Satisfaction= 100%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Visual Timers</li> <li>-Visual Schedules</li> <li>-Visual Boundaries</li> <li>-Environmental Labeling</li> <li>-Choice Boards</li> <li>-Visual Task Analyses</li> <li>-Social Narratives</li> <li>-Antecedent Based Interventions (ABI)</li> <li>-Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)</li> <li>-Prompting</li> <li>-Modeling</li> <li>-Reinforcement</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Skills Support</b>  <i>Brought to you by the Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism, this</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Social Skills Training (SST)</li> <li>-Prompting</li> </ul>

<p>social skills instruction training discusses how social skills are developed and how that development can look different for individuals with autism. The training considers ways of assessing social skills, skills to target, and explores evidence-based strategies that can support autistic individuals.</p> <p><b>Training Satisfaction= 100%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Modeling</li> <li>-Naturalistic Intervention (NI)</li> <li>-Video Modeling</li> <li>-Social Narratives</li> <li>-Visual Supports</li> <li>-Visual Task Analyses</li> <li>-Structured Play Groups</li> <li>-Peer Mediated Intervention and Instruction</li> </ul>
<p><b>Early Childhood Trainings</b></p>	
<p><b>Training Name, Abstract, and Feedback Score</b></p>	<p><b>Evidence-based Practices Addressed</b></p>
<p><b>Supporting Family-Led Development Monitoring</b>  <i>This training will introduce participants to the importance of developmental monitoring, provide an overview of the state’s developmental screener – the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), explain the state’s process for referring children to early intervention services, and describe the types of early intervention services available to different ages of children.</i></p> <p><b>Training Satisfaction= 95%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Responsive teaching</li> <li>-Naturalistic Intervention (NI)</li> <li>-Family-engaged developmental monitoring and screening</li> </ul>
<p><b>Understanding Autism and Strategies for Child Care Providers</b>  <i>This training is for early childhood care providers and is designed to help develop an understanding of autism and how it impacts children differently. The training provides strategies to support young children with autism in a childcare setting.</i></p> <p><b>Offered in Spanish as a statewide during reporting period</b></p> <p><b>Training Satisfaction= 100% (General) &amp; 94% (Before/Aftercare)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Visual Timers</li> <li>-Visual Schedules</li> <li>-Visual Boundaries</li> <li>-Visual Cues</li> <li>-Environmental Labeling -Choice Boards</li> <li>-Visual Task Analyses</li> <li>-Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA)</li> <li>-Reinforcement</li> <li>-Modeling</li> <li>-Prompting</li> <li>-Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Health &amp; Wellness Trainings</b></p>	
<p><b>Training Name, Abstract, and Feedback Score</b></p>	<p><b>Evidence-based Practices Addressed</b></p>
<p><b>Introduction to Autism and Mental Health</b>  <i>The Introduction to Autism and Mental Health training will review the core characteristics of autism and introduce the importance of neurodiversity-affirming and trauma-informed care. Participants will learn how these characteristics increase one’s susceptibility to mental health disorders and the prevalence and presentation of commonly occurring mental health conditions in autistic individuals. The training strives to raise awareness about mental health challenges experienced by this population and provide Delaware-specific mental health resources.</i></p> <p><b>Training Satisfaction= 100%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Cognitive behavioral interventions</li> <li>-Reinforcement</li> </ul>

<p><b>Mental Health Professionals Working with Autistic Individuals</b>  <i>This training is intended for mental health professionals who are committed to creating a more inclusive and affirming mental health landscape for autistic people. The training focuses on delivering sensitive, nonjudgmental care during mental health evaluation and treatment. Using a neurodiversity-affirming lens, it begins with a review of the core characteristics of autism, discussing how autism increases one's susceptibility to experiencing mental health disorders and progresses into ways to modify mental health treatment to best support autistic people.</i></p> <p><b>Training Satisfaction= 100%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Cognitive behavioral interventions</li> <li>-Reinforcement</li> <li>-Visual Cues</li> <li>-Visual Schedules</li> <li>-Visual Timers</li> <li>-Visual Boundaries</li> </ul>
<p><b>Neurodiversity-Affirming Practices and Supports for Mental Health Professionals</b>  <i>Neurodiversity-affirming Practices and Supports for Mental Health Professionals is designed for mental health professionals. The training reviews neurodiversity-affirming language and explores individual-level practices and supports that celebrate neurodiversity and promote self-advocacy. Specifically, participants learn how to disrupt ableist language and ways to promote diversity and inclusion through their practice and within their organizations. Participants also learn how to incorporate neurodiversity-affirming assessment.</i></p> <p><b>Training Satisfaction= 100%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Advanced cognitive behavioral interventions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Autism and Epilepsy: Seizure Recognition and First Aid Certification</b>  <i>The Epilepsy Foundation of Delaware and the Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism are offering training in Autism and Epilepsy: Seizure Recognition and First Aid Certification. This course will review the core characteristics of autism and the co-occurrence of autism and epilepsy.</i></p> <p><i>Participants who successfully complete the post-knowledge assessment in the Epilepsy Foundation Learning Portal will receive a two-year certification in Seizure Recognition and First Aid.</i></p> <p><b>Training Satisfaction= Insufficient respondents</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Seizure recognition and first aid</li> </ul>
<p><b>Autism Spectrum Disorder: First Responders and Law Enforcement</b>  <i>This training is a specialized 3-hour training for law enforcement officers and first responders who respond to behavior health crisis, mental health crisis, and other community call involving autistic individuals. The training primarily focuses on those with patrol responsibilities. Through lectures, interactive learning, and video-based scenarios, participants learn about autism and other developmental disabilities from a law enforcement and family perspective.</i></p> <p><b>Training Satisfaction= 97%</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Antecedent-based strategies</li> <li>-Visual support strategies</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>Training satisfaction measured by the percent of participants who provided a score of 8+ on a 10 point Likert Scale.



## Family Support Services – DNEA Annual Report

Date Range: October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024

Report Prepared by: Dafne Carnright, Director of Family Services

### **Family Support Services**

Autism Delaware’s family support programs serve as the advocacy arm of the DNEA, supporting families of individuals with autism through multiple programs. One such program is its Family Navigation program. Family Navigators meet with families and respond to requests for information about services and supports available in Delaware. Family Navigators are certified to provide family peer support, and we are proud to have a bilingual family navigator that can provide support in Spanish and English. In 2024, Autism Delaware added a second full-time, bilingual, admissions specialist to meet the demand. Admissions specialists collect the requesting family’s contact information, create a client record for the family, and schedule a first appointment with a Family Navigator or enroll them in other Autism Delaware services and programs.

Family Navigators support families in assessing needs, identifying next steps and community resources, and provide psychoeducation around advocacy skills and navigating service systems in our state. Autism Delaware offers family navigation services, on an as-needed basis, to the families of autistic individuals across the lifespan and around the state. The Family Navigation program addresses the *Blueprint for Collective Action Improvement Area 6* (Family Support and Stakeholder engagement).

October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024:

- Family Navigators engaged in 2396 individual support contacts with families

October 1, 2022- September 30, 2023:

- Family Navigators engaged in 2482 individual support contacts with families

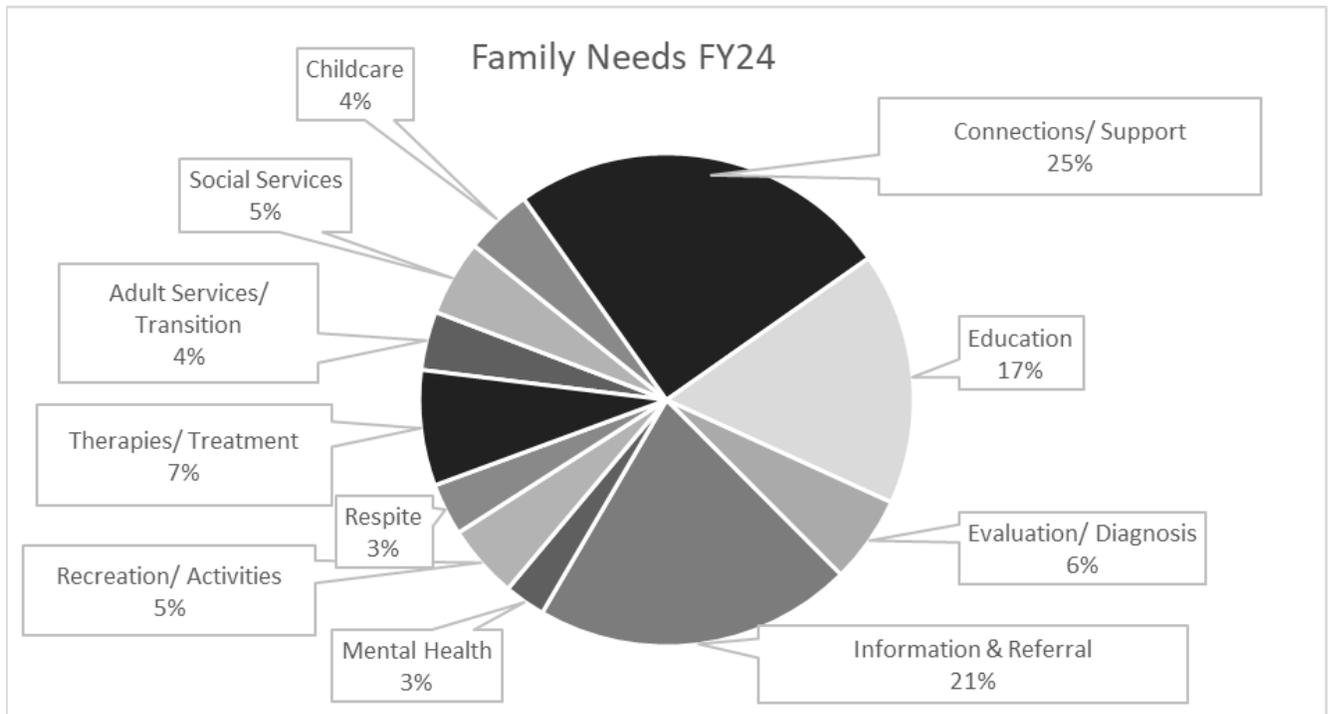
The top needs from families seeking support services in FY2024 were:

1. Connections/Support

2. Information and Referral
3. Education
4. Therapies/Treatment

In FY23, the top needs from families seeking family support services were:

- 1- Evaluation & Diagnosis
- 2- Connection and Support
- 3- Recreation/Activities
- 4- Educational Issues



Family Navigation remains an integral part of the supports and services provided to the autism community by Autism Delaware. The ongoing commitment to families and individuals with autism in our state and to promoting the family voice is foremost in our mission. Autism Delaware’s Family Navigation service is proud to be a trusted resource in the autism community in Delaware.

**Appendix C: DNEA Digital and Print Resources**

<p><b>Resource guides.</b> The DNEA designs resource guides to align with training material covered during remote, live, and recorded workshops. They include topics that range from introductory to advanced. Delaware residents and professionals can order paper copies of the guides, free of charge, through the DNEA website.</p>		
<p>1. What is Neurodiversity? 2. Neurodiversity-Affirming Autism Evaluations<sup>1</sup> 3. Book Club Conversations: I Will Die on This Hill: Autistic Adults, Autism Parents, and the Children Who Deserve a Better World<sup>1</sup> 4. Book Club Conversations: We're Not Broken: Changing the Autism Conversation 5. Research Recap: Avoiding Ableist Language 6. Trauma and Autism 7. Creative CBT: Adapting Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Autism 8. Autism and Epilepsy<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>9. Talking to a Police Officer and my Autism<sup>1</sup> 10. What to do During a Traffic Stop or Car Crash<sup>1</sup> 11. Parent/Caregiver Training 12. Supported Decision-Making in Delaware 13. Understanding Supported Decision-Making in Delaware: A Guide for Community Members<sup>1</sup> 14. Holiday Resource Guide for Families: Strategies for Holidays and Special Events 15. Supporting Social Skills 16. Social Narratives During COVID-19</p>	<p>17. Visual Supports: Creating Visual Schedules 18. Resources for Teaching Human Sexuality 19. Evidence-Based Practices for Teaching a New Skill 20. Research Recap: Prompting and Task Analysis Glossary 21. Least-to-Most Prompting 22. Most-to-Least Prompting 23. Stimulus Prompts 24. Visual Supports: Visual Boundaries<sup>1</sup> 25. Visual Supports: Visual Timers<sup>1</sup> 26. Visual Supports: Choice Boards<sup>1</sup> 27. Visual Supports: Environmental Labels<sup>1</sup> 28. Visual Supports: Task Analyses<sup>1</sup></p>
<p>Evidence-based practices addressed in resource guides:</p>		
<p>-Visual supports -Cognitive behavioral interventions -Parent mediated interventions -Social narratives</p>	<p>-Reinforcement strategies -Task analysis -Chaining procedures -Modeling as a prime</p>	<p>-Modeling as a prompt -Prompt types -Prompting procedures -Self-determination strategies</p>
<p><b>Training videos.</b> The DNEA continued to expand its library of videos that can be viewed on-demand through the DNEA website. This library of recordings includes full-length trainings and brief evidence-based practice tutorials that are designed to support individuals who work in a wide range of settings.</p>		
<p>1. Discussing Disability 2. Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorder 3. Disrupting Ableism 4. Delaware Resources and Supports 5. Providing Neurodiversity-Affirming Care to Autistic Youth and Families 6. Introduction to Evidence-based Practices for Individuals with Autism 7. Designing and Using Reinforcement</p>	<p>8. Social Skills Support 9. Least to Most Prompting 10. Most to Least Prompting 11. Task Analysis 12. Introduction to Visual Supports 13. Classroom Management Strategies for Students with Autism 14. Visuals in Medical Settings 15. Introduction to Prompting 16. Supported Decision-Making: From Justice to Jenny to Justice for All</p>	<p>17. Education, Employment, and Independent Living: SDM in Special Education and Vocational Rehab 18. Taking Care, Taking the Lead: Supportive Decision-Making in Health Care and Life Planning 19. My Life, My Decisions: A Supported Decision-Making Summit Video<sup>1</sup> 20. Practice Traffic Stop Pre-Driving Video<sup>1</sup></p>
<p>Evidence-based practices highlighted in training videos:</p>		
<p>-Visual supports -Social narratives -Video modeling</p>	<p>-Reinforcement strategies -Task analysis -Chaining procedures -Modeling as a prime</p>	<p>-Modeling as a prompt -Prompt types -Prompting procedures -Self-determination strategies</p>

<sup>1</sup>Content developed in FY2024