*Governor Christie:* One of the top priorities of my administration over these past six years has been the developmentally disabled community in New Jersey. Our state has the highest rate of autism of any state in the country, so those issues are extraordinarily important to both myself and First Lady Mary Pat. We’ve been working incredibly hard together, not only to try to have more funding for the developmentally disabled community but also greater level of attention to the needs and issues of these individuals and their families. Prior to my administration, New Jersey institutionalized more folks with developmental disabilities than any state in America other than Texas. It’s extraordinary to me that almost regardless of the level of care that someone needed, people were being placed in institutions in New Jersey and I just thought it was wrong, and I think the science has shown that it’s wrong, and our goal is to have everybody reach their fullest potential, and as I’ve traveled around the state, when you talk to people about that everybody agrees with that, because either they have a member of their family who has a developmental disability or they have a friend who has a family member, or they know someone in their school, and so people can really relate to this.

**RECOGNIZING THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

Governor Christie is committed to a fundamental rethinking of how individuals with developmental disabilities receive services. The Governor has long spoken of the state’s moral imperative to recognize the individuality and unique needs of every New Jerseyan with a developmental disability.

**Focusing Services On Families, Not Departments:**

The Children’s System of Care (CSOC) within the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) addresses the holistic needs and concerns of families with children with developmental disabilities and other complex needs in one place.  It ensures families of people with developmental disabilities have access to every possible State government support.

* It is the “home” for children with multiple needs, bringing together programs once scattered throughout State government.  This allows for a more family-centric approach.
* Through CSOC youth with Autism have access to in home supports, such as Applied Behavioral Analysis and Care Management.  Eligible families have access to support services, such as respite and assistive technologies.
* Underlying this change is the view that children with developmental disabilities and their families should not be “carved out” of generic supports and/or the systems of care that serve other children and families in New Jersey.  Services should be integrated, provided as part of a continuum, and responsive to the whole child and the whole family.

CSOC takes a holistic view of the child and works to wraparound services to support the youth and family, helping the youth achieve his/her highest potential.  It provides services addressing behavioral, developmental, intellectual, and substance use disorders.

**Ensuring Coordinated Services Through Transitions:**

The Department of Human Services and DCF worked together to ensure that the transition to this new integrated system occurred smoothly, as children with developmental disabilities who enter the system, regardless of their needs, are referred to DCF for services.

* Between the ages of 16-21, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) Planning for Adult Life project assists students with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families in planning for adulthood to ensure the opportunity for meaningful and coordinated transition planning. All direct services will continue to be provided by DCF until age 21 and be provided by DDD after 21.
* Beginning July 1, 2015, with the implementation of the Medicaid-based, fee-for-service reimbursement system, behavioral supports including Applied Behavioral Analysis will be a reimbursable service through the Division’s new Medicaid Supports Waiver (“Supports Program”) and its long-established Medicaid Community Care Waiver.

**THE CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION IS COMMITTED TO HELPING NEW JERSEYANS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES LEAD RICHER LIVES**

New Jersey is considered to have one of the best systems in the nation for identifying, diagnosing and documenting children with autism spectrum disorders, Governor Christie’s fiscal year 2016 budget provides $154 million for the Department of Health’s Early Intervention System, which provides early identification and referral, service coordination, evaluation/assessment, and developmental early intervention services for children from birth to three with developmental delays and disabilities.

New Jersey is one of only eight states with an Autism Registry that requires reporting by neurologists, pediatricians, nurses and other autism providers so children can be referred for resources and services. Approximately 16,000 children under the age of 22 are registered, which has heightened awareness among parents and providers of indicators for Autism Spectrum Disorders. New Jersey is also at the forefront of supporting autism research through the Governor’s Council for Medical Research and Treatment of Autism, which has provided nearly $31 million in research grants since 2008 as well as with a Center for Excellence located at Montclair State University

* Making Autism Outreach a Priority. In August 2010, the Christie Administration established, from a key recommendation of the Adults with Autism Task Force, the Office on Autism within the Department of Human Services’ Division of Developmental Disabilities, creating a centralized location to coordinate autism-related information. The Office organized an Interdepartmental Work Group, which included the New Jersey Departments of Human Services; Health; Children and Families; Community Affairs; Education; and Labor and Work Force Development, to enhance coordination among agencies charged with providing services to persons with autism spectrum disorder.
* Building on Commitment to Individuals with Developmental Disabilities. Governor Christie has long spoken of the State’s moral imperative to recognize the individuality and unique needs of every New Jerseyan with a developmental disability and is committed to helping them lead richer lives. Since 2010, this Administration has invested over $450 million in community placements and related services.
* Providing Transition Services for Adults. The Christie Administration has dedicated funding for young adults with developmental disabilities who age out of the Department of Education’s special education entitlement by ensuring a seamless transition to the Department of Human Services’ adult day services.
* Protecting the Dignity of People with Developmental Disabilities. In 2010, Governor Christie signed into law the “Central Registry of Offenders Against Individuals with Developmental Disabilities.” This law exclusively applies to Department of Human Services’ funded, licensed, contracted or regulated programs that provide services to people with developmental disabilities. It required DHS to maintain a central registry – a confidential list of caregivers working in these programs who have been determined to have abused, neglected, or exploited an individual with a developmental disability.
* Supporting Employment Goals. In April 2012, Governor Christie declared New Jersey an ‘Employment First’ state. This inclusive policy means that the pursuit of gainful employment is an activity for all. New Jersey provides the necessary supports to assist individuals with ASD and other developmental disabilities in obtaining employment opportunities.
* New Staff Code For Board Certified Behavioral Analysts. In order to recognize the role of Board Certified Behavior Analysts in the continuum of services provided to New Jersey students with disabilities, the NJ Department of Education added a job code to the NJSMART Staff Submission for those certified by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board.  This will not only bring attention to the importance of the services in enabling some students with autism spectrum disorder but will provide the data the Department will need to determine the full scope of services provided.

**NEW JERSEY HAS ONE OF THE BEST SYSTEMS IN THE NATION FOR IDENTIFYING, DIAGNOSING AND CARING FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM**

New Jersey is a national leader in early intervention and education of children with autism which impacts about 1 in 45 children across the Garden State and their families. Governor Christie and his Administration remain firmly committed to finding new and innovative ways to help New Jersey families impacted by Autism Spectrum Disorders and improving the lives of their loved ones.

New Jersey is at the forefront of supporting autism research through the Governor’s Council for Medical Research and Treatment of Autism, which has provided more than $35 million in research grants since 2008.

Established in 1999, the mission of the Governor’s Council for Medical Research and Treatment of Autism is to advance the current knowledge of ASD by awarding grants and contracts to public and private nonprofit entities.

* In June 2012, the New Jersey Department of Health named Montclair State University as the Autism Center of Excellence, marking a new coordinated approach to autism research in New Jersey. The mission of the Autism Center of Excellence is to research, apply and advance interventions that address the physical and behavioral health needs of children, adolescents and adults with ASD.
* The Council’s initiatives are funded by a one dollar surcharge from motor vehicle violations and fines, which results in approximately $4 million being dedicated to autism research, treatment and education annually.