



# Jackson County ACCESS Team: Collaborative Center for Autism

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## COLLABORATIVE CENTER FOR AUTISM



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**Supporting** equitable & excellent education for all

JACKSON COUNTY ACCESS TEAM MEMBERS (ACCESS Team since 2014)

# Governor's Oregon Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorder



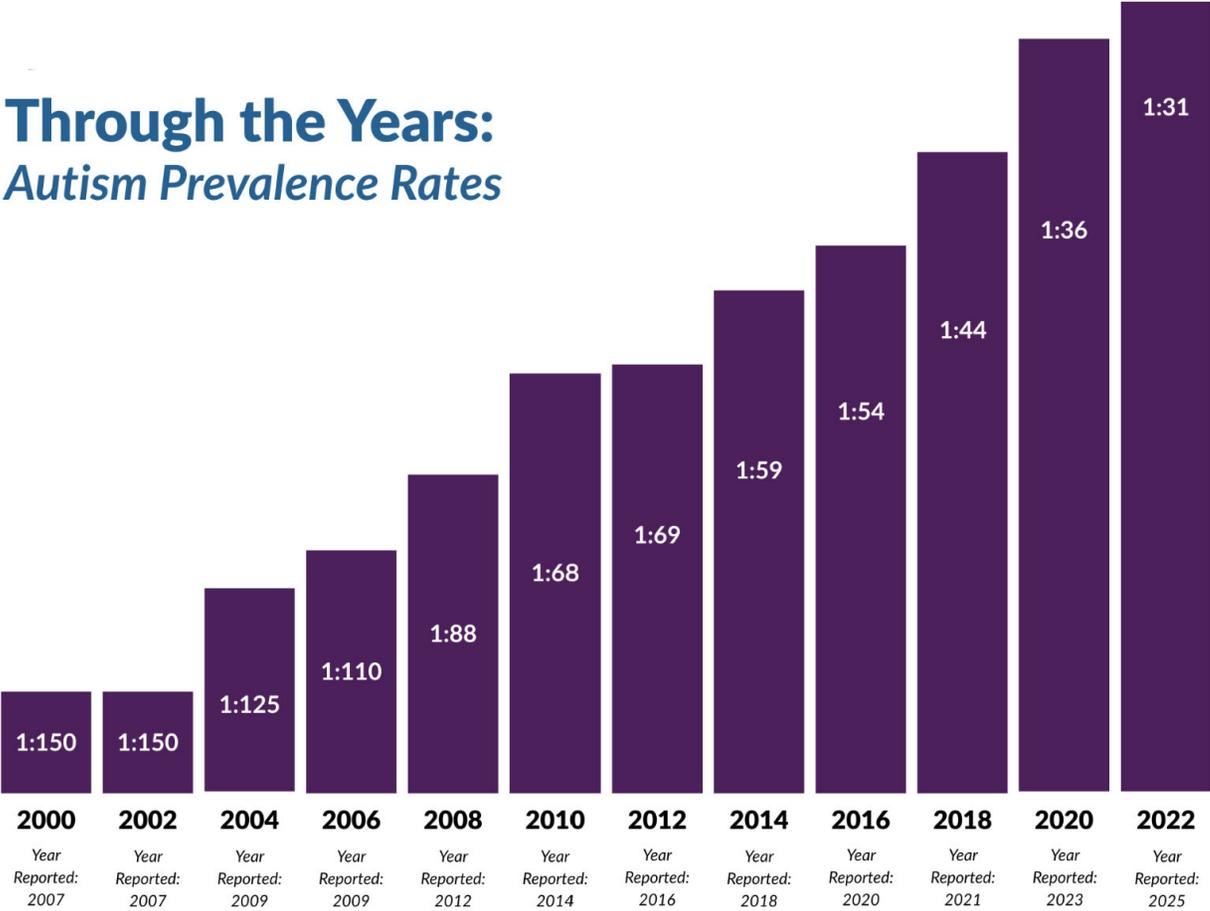
***Created in 2009 to provide a forum for the various stakeholders in the autism community to work collaboratively to develop and implement solutions to the challenges faced by autistic individuals and their families.***



# ASSESSMENT NEEDS



**Through the Years:**  
*Autism Prevalence Rates*



# Governor's Oregon Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorder



- Increased prevalence of ASD + shortage of qualified providers to evaluate children = long waitlist for evaluation in healthcare settings and overwhelm of educational agencies
- Especially for young children, getting a timely evaluation is essential. Autism alters the earliest stages of social emotional development and in the first 5 years, the brain undergoes a critical period of development, so a priority for all autistic children is to gain **ACCESS** to interventions that support sensitive and responsive interaction as early in development as possible.

## Barriers in Oregon:

- Rural area—majority of children go to urban centers
  - Long wait lists for few specialty providers
  - Challenges of travel with young children with autism
  - Costs of travel; more time off work



# Two Worlds of Autism Identification



Making a medical diagnosis of ASD or determining eligibility for educational services for ASD are two separate processes. Don't always agree. Creates confusion for families.

## Medical Diagnosis:

Answers the question, "**Does this child have autism?**"

- The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5).
- **Purpose:** Clinical diagnosis, access to medical therapies (ABA, speech, OT), insurance coverage.

## Educational Eligibility:

Answers the question, "**Does the child's autism adversely impact their education, requiring specialized instruction?**"

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- **Purpose:** To provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) through an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

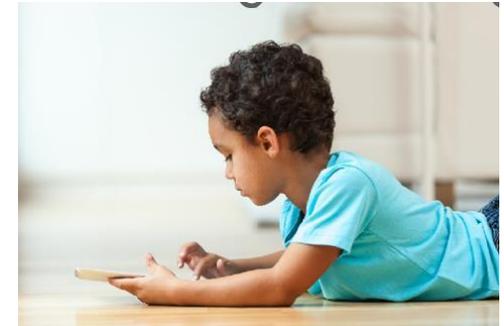


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# Assuring Comprehensive Care through Enhanced Service Systems for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder



- Organized and trained 8 local community-based team of medical and educational professionals to provide comprehensive evaluations.
- Provides a single, valid, and timely identification process in the local community to determine both educational eligibility for autism services and a medical diagnosis in children birth to 5 years.
- Aligns with the Oregon Commission of Autism Spectrum Disorder (OCASD) State Plan to improve delivery of equitable, comprehensive, coordinated care for children with ASD.
- OHSU ACCESS Project provides ongoing Continuing Education, technical assistance and networking with a multidisciplinary group of autism providers.



# Multidisciplinary Team with Parent Partner



## Benefits for Families

- Timely, comprehensive evaluations that are close to home
- Access to Parent Partners who can connect families to local resources
- Coordination of care and services between school and community providers
- Less cost and stress associated with evaluation
- Collaborative evaluation to determine medical diagnosis and educational eligibility



## Parent Partners:

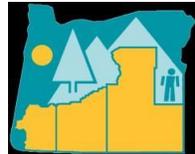
Support families during the assessment process & link them to key community resources.



- Parent Partners are paid members of the team who are parents of children with ASD. (Have been paid from ACCESS Grant money.)
- They have experienced the impact of a diagnosis and understand the challenges and joys autism brings to life.
- Help parents navigate through systems and services.
- Familiar with local, state, and national resources that families might find helpful.
- They are employees trained in and required to follow all confidentiality practices.
- Attend monthly training on topics of parent-professional partnerships, systems navigation, resources, and more.
- Network with other Parent Partners throughout the state to share best practices.



# COLLABORATIVE CENTER FOR AUTISM



**SOUTHERN OREGON**  
Education Service District

**JACKSON COUNTY EARLY INTERVENTION /  
EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION**  
INTERVENCIÓN TEMPRANA / EDUC. ESPECIAL PREESCOLAR  
DEL CONDADO JACKSON



**Rowan Hill-Walko, Autism Spectrum Disorder Specialist**  
**Nancy Levos, SLP (DESD EI/ECSE)**  
**Debra Koutnik, MD (Asante Physician Partners)**  
**Agnes Lee-Wolfe, Coordinator – Special Programs**



**COLLABORATIVE CENTER FOR AUTISM**  
Housed at SOESD Phoenix Office

# COLLABORATIVE CENTER FOR AUTISM



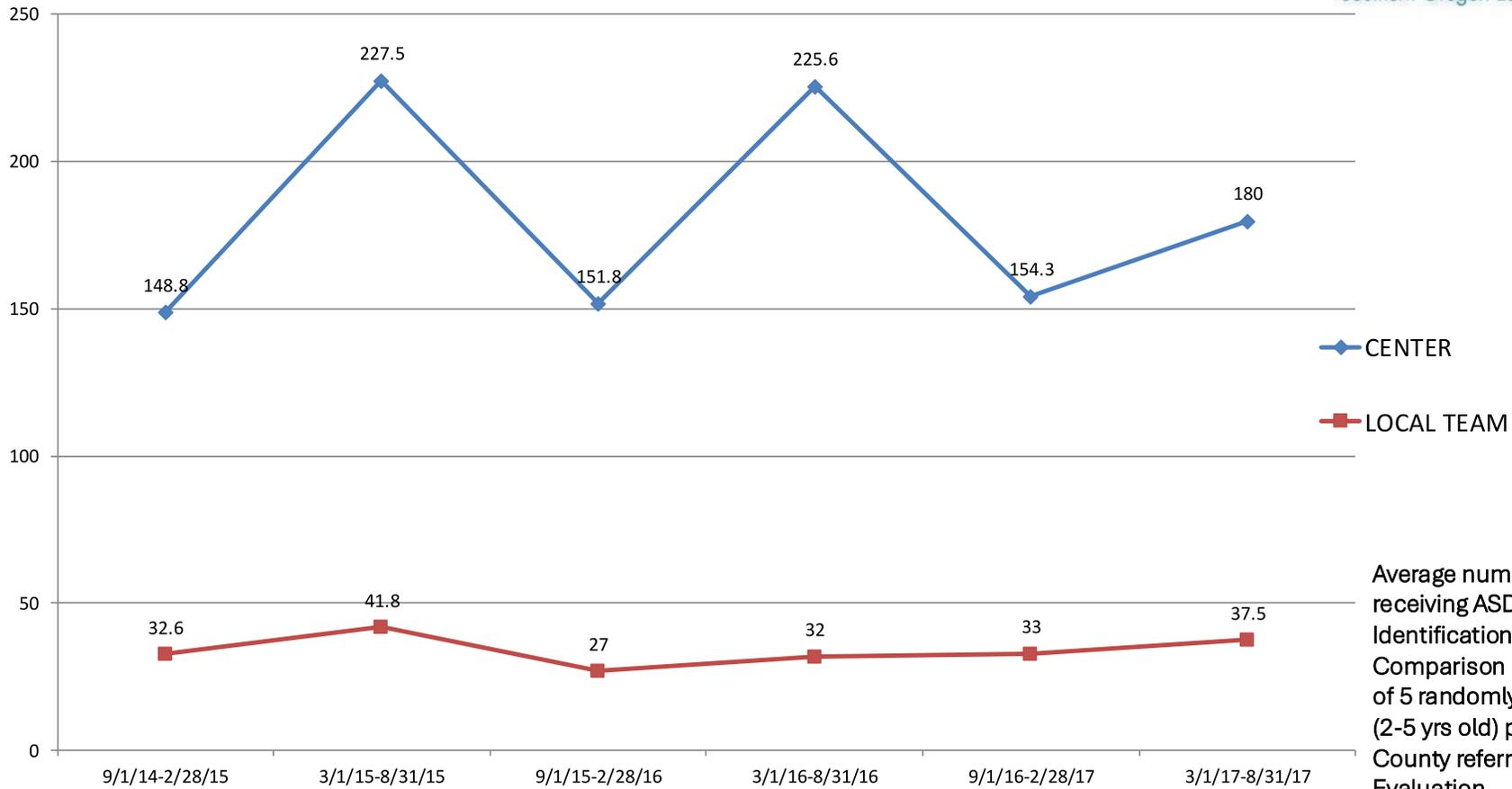
JACKSON COUNTY EARLY INTERVENTION /  
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Southern Oregon Education Service District

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Agnes Lee-Wolfe, Coordinator – Special Programs  
February 20, 2019

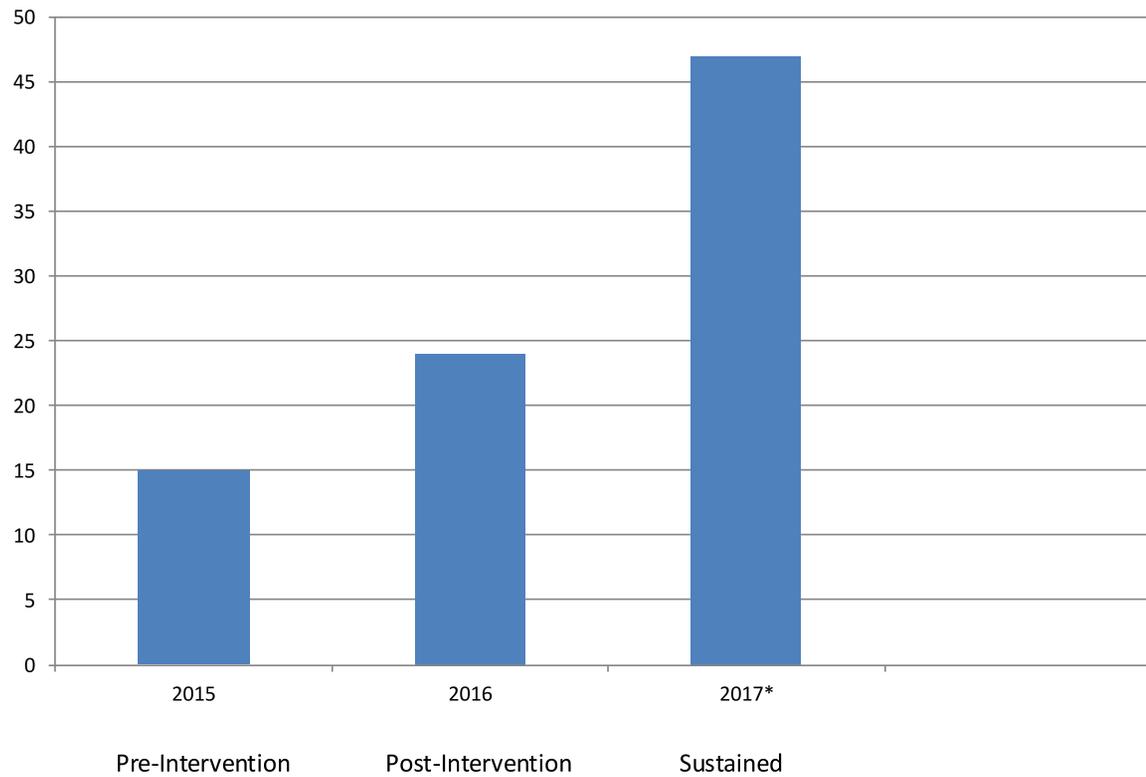
# DAYS FROM REFERRAL TO COMPLETED ASD EVALUATION



Average number of days from receiving ASD Team Referral to Parent Identification Meeting for local Team. Comparison data points are average of 5 randomly chosen age-matched (2-5 yrs old) patients from Jackson County referred to CDRC for ASD Evaluation.

# Effectiveness of Community Outreach

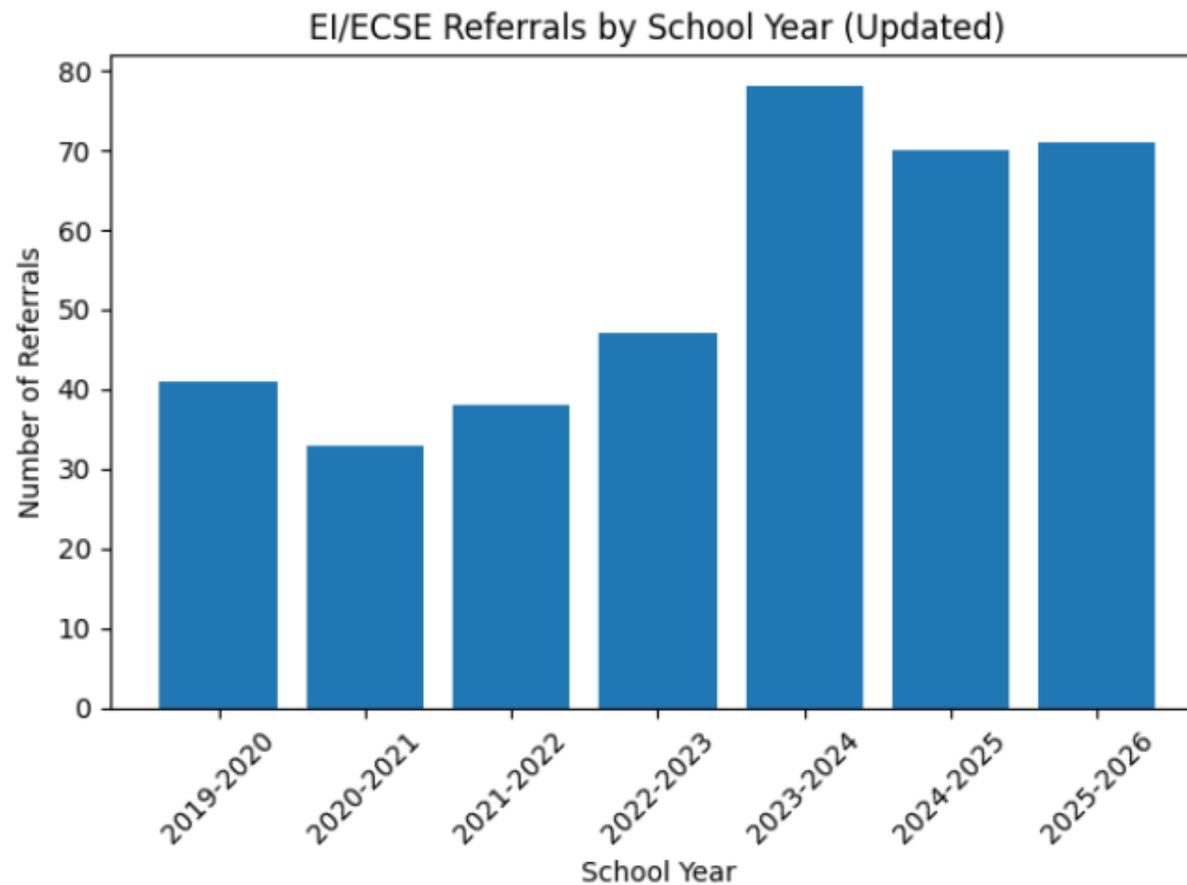
## Number Patients Referred to ASD Team



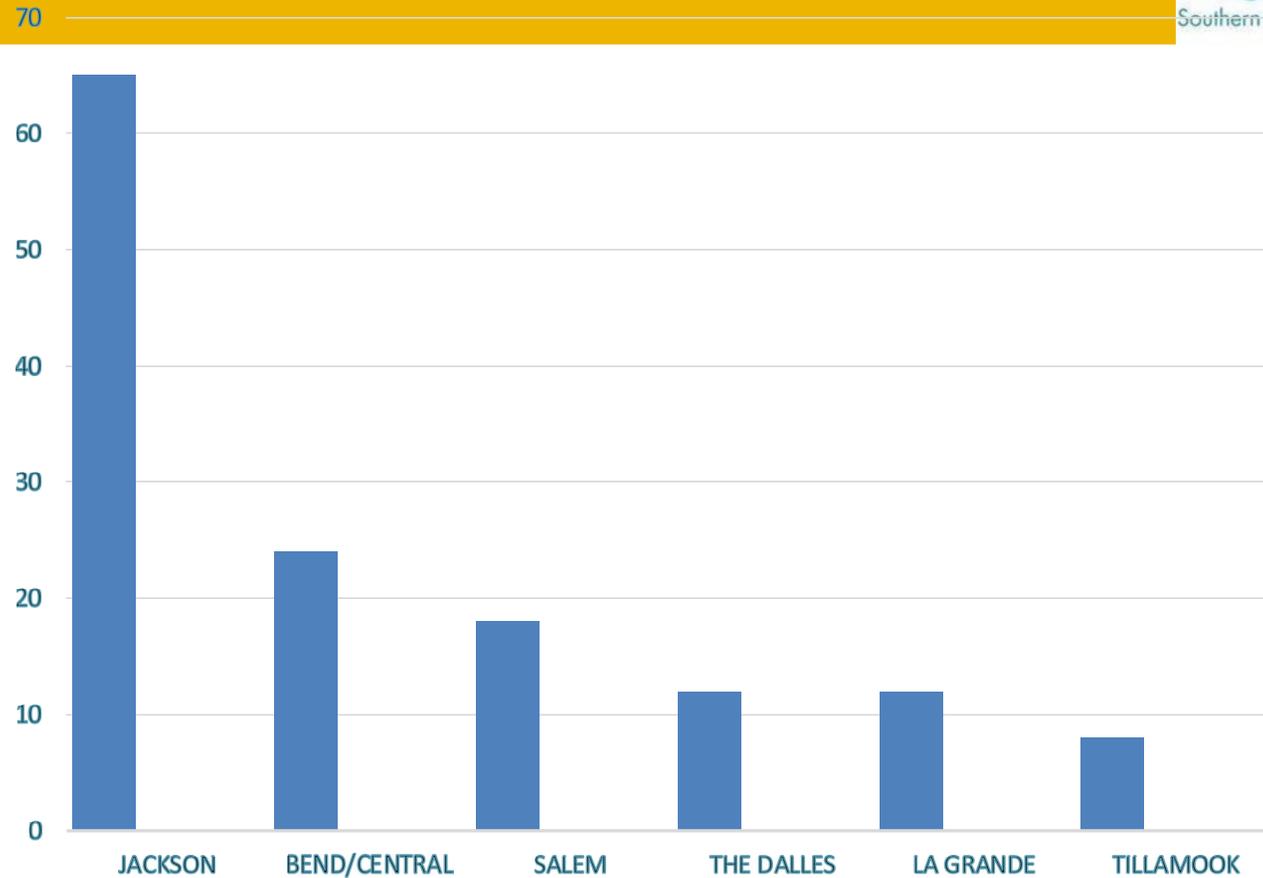
Intervention  
1/2016 of outreach  
to local PCPs and EI  
staff via office visits

■ No Patients per Year

# Current Referral Numbers

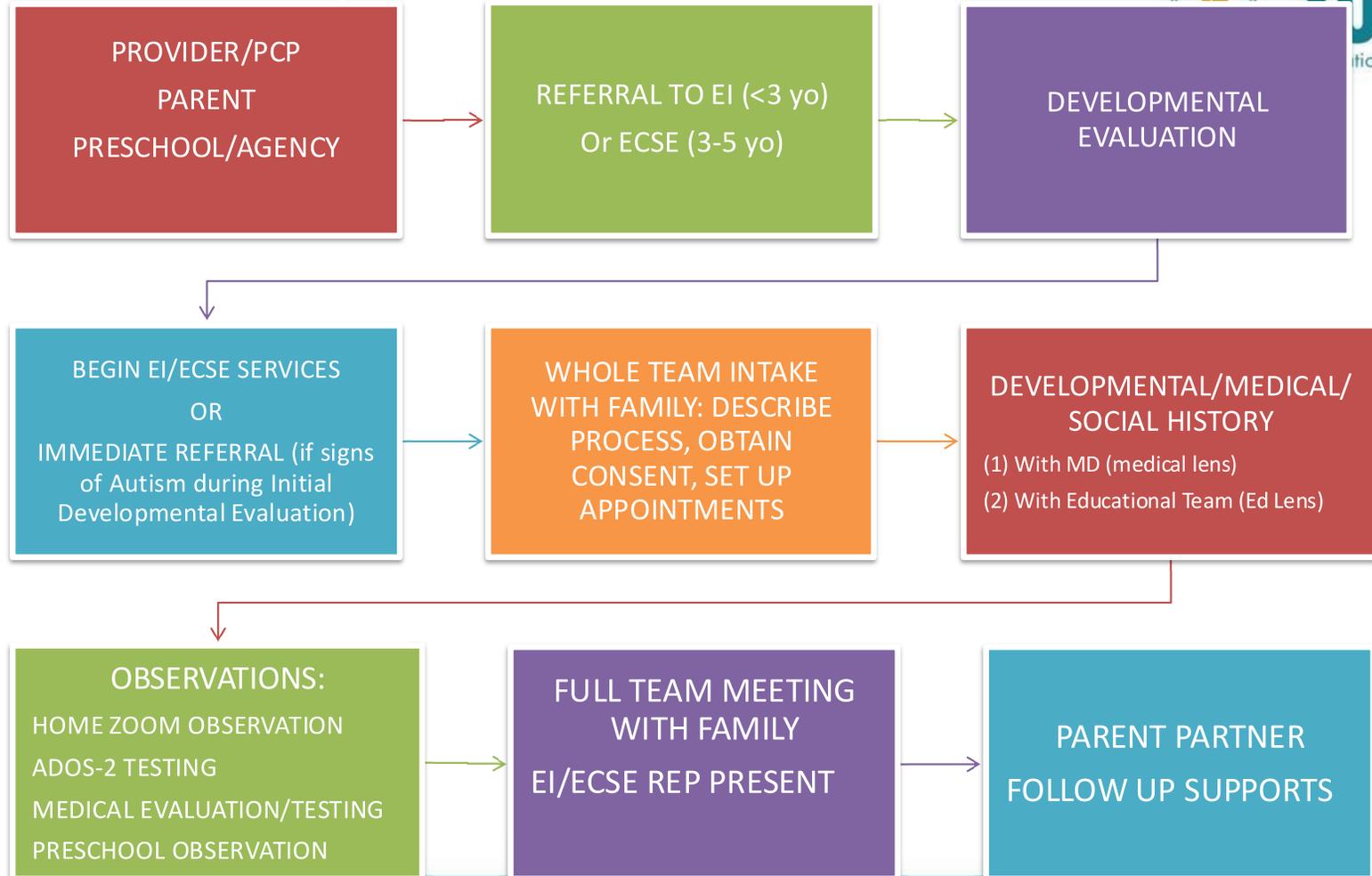


# Number of Children Evaluated per ACCESS Team (2024-25)



# Jackson County

# CESS Team Process



# Assuring Comprehensive Care through Enhanced Service Systems



## Benefits for Pediatric Providers and Educators

- ◆ Increases knowledge and skills in the identification and management of autism
- ◆ Improves access to medical, educational and mental health information/resources
- ◆ Builds community capacity for identifying children with autism locally
- ◆ Increases collaboration and resource sharing among community professionals
- ◆ Provides consultation with content experts across the state



# Partnerships we collaborate with



- **Swindells, Help Me Grow Program**
- **Interpreters and Translators to help support Spanish-Speaking Families**
- **Jackson County EI/ECSE—referral agency**
  - Provide Medical and Educational Evaluations for Early Intervention aged children (Birth-3) and Early Childhood Special Education (3-5 years old) for the following districts: Ashland, Phoenix-Talent, Eagle Point, Rogue River School District
- **Added Adaptive Assessment with SOESD School Psychologist, Heather McClendon to provide families with Adaptive assessment, helpful to get eligibility for Developmental Disability Services.**
- **Participate in Monthly ECHO presentations with all ACCESS programs in the state. We have to present a case 1x/year.**

## ACCESS Monthly Autism ECHO Case Presentation: Equity Considerations for Cultural Differences



### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- Is it ethical?
- Role of dual language acquisition in discriminating between a Speech and Language Disorder versus Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Role of cultural considerations in ASD evaluation and how can we maintain cultural humility
- How can monolingual English speakers best serve monolingual Spanish speaking families?



# What Families Say About ACCESS Teams:



***“This team approach just makes sense. Because of this combined evaluation, my child got both early intervention AND other therapies much more quickly.”***

***“Its not easy as people think it is to travel to Portland with a child who probably has autism. Our child does not travel well. It was so helpful being able to stay in our own community working with people we knew.”***

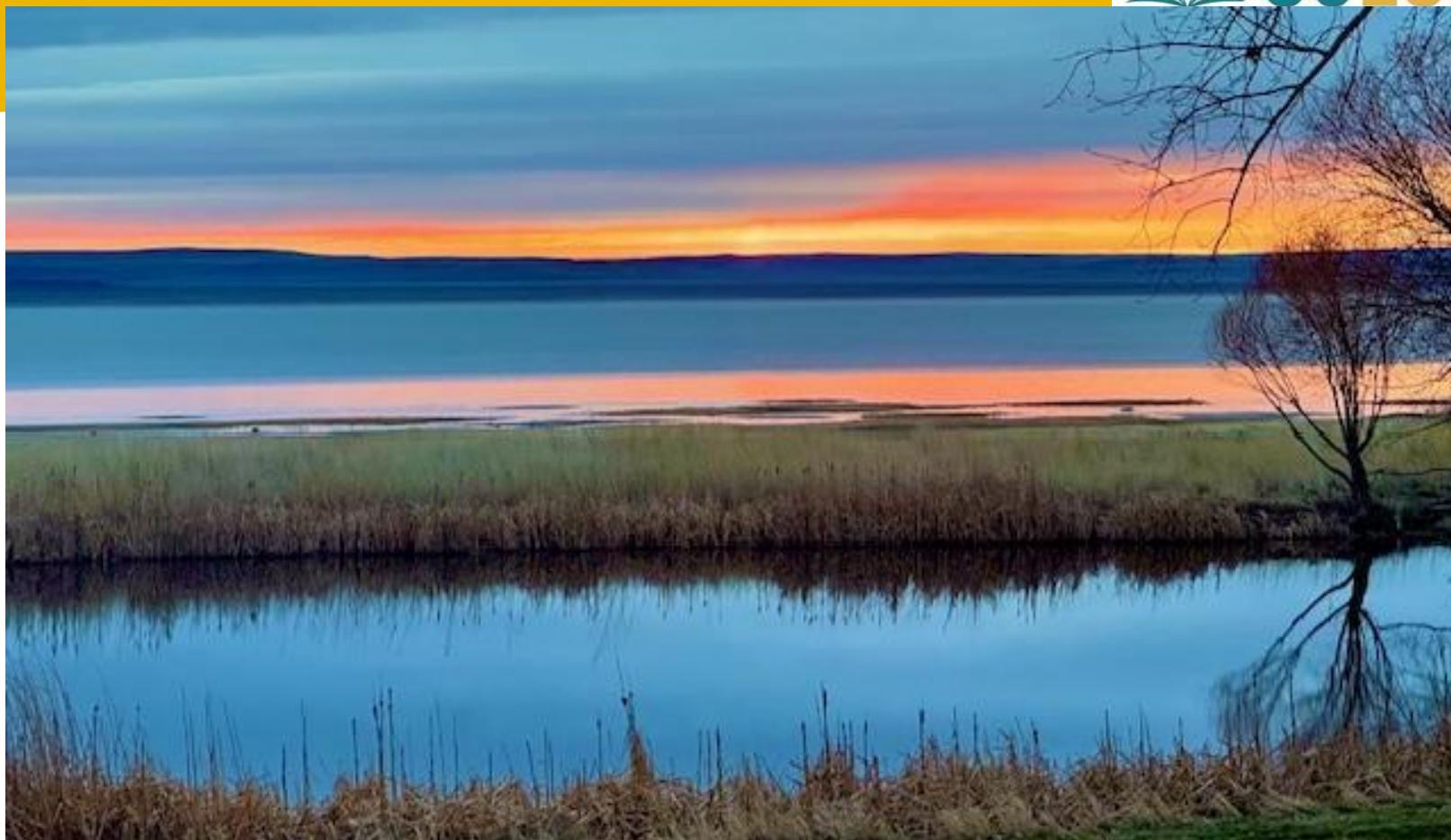
***“The Parent Partner on the team was so nice. She really knew what we were going through and gave us some materials to look at when we were ready. She made herself available to answer questions, too, which we really appreciate.”***

# Looking to the Future: Opportunities and Challenges



1. Move to new space presents new opportunities.
2. Ongoing funding of parent partner if/when OHSU stops funding that position.
3. Begin school based Medicaid Billing for licensed positions (MD, SLP, School Psychologist)
4. Sustainability of CCA Team Members who are retiring.
5. Increase our supports for families by offering Parent Mediated Relational Therapies right after identification.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME



Supporting equitable & excellent education for all

Sunrise at Summer Lake, Oregon