OPINION

Education biggest contributor to autism's high costs

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Education is the largest cost associated with caring for children with autism, report two studies published 9 June.

In a study published in *JAMA Pediatrics*, researchers **compared costs in the U.S. and U.K.** for children who have autism, with and without intellectual disability. They found overall costs to be substantially higher in the U.S., particularly for children with an intellectual disability. Interestingly, the U.S. spends far more per year on education for children under the age of 6 than for older children and adolescents. By contrast, the cost of education rises with age in the U.K.

A second study, published in the journal *Autism*, **compared costs for adolescents in the U.S.** who have autism with costs for those with special needs and for those developing typically. Education stood out as the most costly service by far in all three groups. At nearly $29,500 over six months, services for adolescents with autism cost more than twice as much as services for those with special needs, and more than six times as much as for typically developing adolescents.