

CDC Estimates the Increase of Autism Prevalence to 1 in 36 Children in the U.S.

— Study also showed that early evaluations in young children (4-year-olds) started to decline as the pandemic set in.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released two new prevalence of autism reports from the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network on Thursday, March 23, 2023. They looked at the prevalence rates, characteristics of autism, and screening and diagnostic information of 4-year-olds and 8-year-olds. As a result, the CDC



reports a continued increase in the prevalence rate with one in every 36 children being diagnosed with autism (approximately 4% of boys and 1% of girls). Previous to this week's new CDC report, autism was reported by 2021 ADDM findings at the rate of 1 in every 44 eight-year-olds.

The findings being reported are based on surveillance data from 11 monitoring sites in various states around the country. These 11 communities participate in the CDC's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network. The data varies widely by location—prevalence of 1 in 22 children in California, 1 in 35 in New Jersey, 1 in 43 in Maryland, and so on. More information about each of the 11 states can be found on the CDC's website at ASD "A Deeper Dive" and in the links at the bottom of their website, <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/addm-community-report/deeper-dive.html>. The CDC said the prevalence variations could be due to how communities are identifying children with autism and the availability of services for early detection and evaluation and diagnostic practices.

The CDC's ADDM Network 2023 Community Report on Autism concluded the following: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/addm-community-report/index.html>

8-YEAR-OLDS with Autism--What did this study find?

- One in every 36 children had autism. This was more than what was found in earlier studies (1 in every 44 children had autism in the previous study)
- More Black, Hispanic, and Asian or Pacific Islander children were identified with autism than White children. This is the first time the ADDM Network observed this finding among 8-year-old children.
- For every one girl identified with autism, four boys were identified with autism.
- More Black children with autism also had an intellectual disability than White and Hispanic children with autism.

4-YEAR-OLDS with Autism --What did this study find?

- Children born in 2016 were more likely (56%) to receive an autism diagnosis by age 4 compared with children born in 2012, among 4-year-old children in the 11 ADDM areas in 2020. After COVID-19 started, fewer children were evaluated for or identified with autism.
- For every one girl identified with autism, three boys were identified with autism.
- More Black, Hispanic, and Asian or Pacific Islander children were identified with autism than White children. This finding among 4-year-old children was first observed by the ADDM Network in 2018.
- About three out of every four children identified with autism had been tested by the time they were 3 years old.

These findings will help CDC determine if autism is more common in some groups than in others. This information can also help the CDC find new and better ways to support our children and our families.

Please keep in mind that Autism Pittsburgh is here to help you find information, referral assistance, advocacy, programs and support. Please reach out to us if you have questions, need guidance, or just need someone to point you in the right direction for services. We are here for you and those you love living with autism.