

Human Development and Disability

National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD) prevents disease and promotes equity in health and development of people with or at risk for disabilities. Infants, children, youth and adults should have the opportunity for full participation in life.



Our focus includes these key efforts:

- [Disparities in Health Among People with Disabilities](#)
Identifying and reducing disparity in key health indicators, including obesity, among children, youth and adults with disabilities.
- [Disparities in Health Care Access for People with Disabilities](#)
Reducing disparities in health care access for people with disabilities.
- [Incorporating Disability Status into Surveys, Policies and Practices](#)
Incorporating disability status as a demographic variable into all relevant CDC surveys, policies and practices.
- [Child Development](#)
Improving developmental outcomes of children.
- [Hearing Loss in Children](#)
Ensuring that all newborns are screened and assessed for hearing loss and receive appropriate intervention.

We are committed to a life course perspective—by that we mean not only thinking about people of all ages, but also recognizing the importance of earlier experiences in setting the course for later life; and understanding how people live over their lifespan.

Public health has a vital role to play in promoting the health and quality of life for people with, and at risk for, disabilities. There are 54 million people in the United States who have a disability, and many more are at risk for developing or acquiring one in their lifetime through injury, illness or aging. People with disabilities represent a diverse group of children, youth, adults and elders who share the experience of living with limitations in cognition, mobility, hearing, vision, or behavioral/mental health functioning.

Disability-associated health costs are substantial—estimated at almost \$400 billion in 2006, with public resources paying 70% of those costs. Despite these costs, people with disabilities are four

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times as likely to report fair or poor health compared to people without a disability. We know that many health problems for people with disabilities are preventable through improved access to health care services and health programs.

CDC formally recognized the health of people with disabilities as a significant public health concern in 1988 when it established a program to promote the health of people with disabilities and to prevent health problems that are frequently experienced. This program strives to include people with disabilities in mainstream health programs and services wherever possible, to support the development of cross-disability-specific programs when necessary, and to help build condition-specific programs when essential. The needs of disability populations are addressed through a network of state disability and health programs, public practice and resource centers, and a disability and health data system.

NCBDDD invests in child development, including early hearing detection and intervention programs, since childhood is the ideal time for interventions that promote lifetime health and development. NCBDDD focuses on certain child-onset conditions and infant hearing loss so that children can reach their full potential in life.

We coordinate with many CDC programs that focus on chronic diseases, injuries, emergency preparedness, environmental health, and minority health. Our collaborative work with other agencies and organizations to influences research, programs and policies for the populations we serve. Recognizing that resources are limited now and in the future, NCBDDD will continue to cultivate strategic partnerships, capacity building, and collaborations to obtain maximum effect and positive outcomes.

Funded Networks in 2011

NCBDDD funds four types of networks:

- 53 states, territories and DC to collect data on early infant hearing detection.
- A network of 16 state disability and health programs that engage in various data, policy and health promotion efforts to promote the health and wellbeing of people with disabilities in their states.
- Various disability organizations that consist of public health practice and resource centers – currently funding Centers in paralysis, limb loss, physical activity and obesity, Tourette syndrome and ADHD. Depending on budget levels in the future, other topic-specific centers will be added.
- Supporting several condition-specific networks of clinical consortia for muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, and fragile X syndrome.

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