Autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities are some of the most significant child health issues facing families and our nation today. CDC’s National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD) has accelerated the search for causes and ways to address the needs of families and communities. Better tracking, research, and improved early identification are leading us to a better understanding of autism spectrum disorder and better results for children.

Budget

Learn more about budget

Learn more about state funding

Accomplishments

- Worked with the Health Resources and Services Administration to release data from a survey of parents estimating that in 2011-2012, approximately 1 in 50 school-aged children had autism spectrum disorder. These data help us understand what families are experiencing and are further evidence that the estimated number of school-aged children with autism has increased.
• Released data and a Community Report from the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Cerebral Palsy Network. NCBDDD’s report showed that the prevalence of autism spectrum disorder among children with cerebral palsy was higher than among their peers without cerebral palsy—about 7% vs. 1%. These data also showed that cerebral palsy remains the most common motor disability in childhood, estimating that 1 in 323 children has cerebral palsy. Information about the co-occurrence of autism spectrum disorder and other conditions like cerebral palsy can help direct research into shared risk factors and causes.

• Reported on the methods of the Study to Explore Early Development (SEED): a first step in releasing results of this important study which will help us learn more about factors that may put children at risk for autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities.

• Supported the Autism Society and the Arc of the United States to work with diverse communities across the country to conduct a series of community engagement activities focused on the reduction of disparities in autism spectrum disorder identification and services.

• Promoted integration of "Learn the Signs. Act Early." messages and materials into national-level programs such as Early Head Start, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and YMCA. A pilot project in St. Louis, Missouri WIC clinics successfully incorporated developmental monitoring using “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” materials into daily operations; a larger demonstration project built on this model is currently being replicated in four counties in Missouri. NCBDDDD also updated and launched new “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” developmental milestone checklists for parents.
Looking to the Future

Autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities are important public health concerns, and NCBDDD’s Division of Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities works to understand these conditions to help children live to the fullest. In 2014, NCBDDD will release new data from the ADDM Network on the number and characteristics of children with autism spectrum disorder to inform service needs and document progress towards early identification goals. Through SEED, we will learn more about factors that may put children at risk for autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities. Through “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” we will continue to promote developmental monitoring, screening, and follow-up to improve early identification of children with autism and other developmental disabilities so children and families can get the services and support they need.

Notable 2013 Scientific Publications


References


To view the annual report online, please visit:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/aboutus/annualreport2013

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