

A Snapshot of Autism Spectrum Disorder in California

Findings from the California Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (CA-ADDM) program help us to understand more about the number of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), the characteristics of those children, and the age at which they are first evaluated and diagnosed.

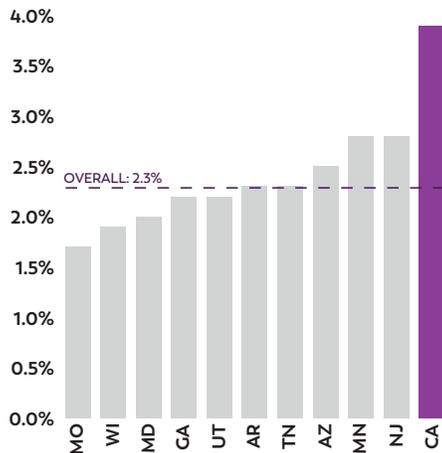


SITE TRACKING AREA

Among 8-year-olds **Among 4-year-olds**

About 1 in 26

Or **3.9%** of **8-year-old** children in an area of California were identified with ASD by CA-ADDM in 2018



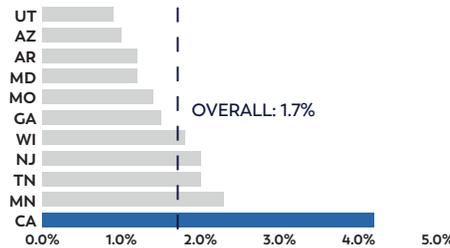
This percentage is higher than the average percentage identified with ASD (2.3%) in all communities in the United States where CDC tracked ASD among 8-year-olds in 2018.

By 36 months of age

Half of **8-year-old** children were diagnosed with ASD

About 1 in 24

Or **4.2%** of **4-year-old** children were identified with ASD by CA-ADDM in 2018



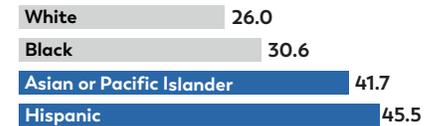
This percentage is higher than the average percentage identified with ASD (1.7%) in all communities in the United States where CDC tracked ASD among 4-year-olds in 2018.

Among 8-year-olds

There were **no significant differences** in ASD prevalence between White, Black, Asian or Pacific Islander, and Hispanic children

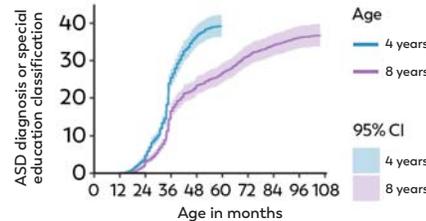
Among 4-year-olds

Hispanic 4-year-old children were **1.8x** as likely and Asian or Pacific Islander children were **1.6x** as likely to be identified with ASD as White children. They were also **1.5x** as likely to be identified with ASD as Black children



Values indicate prevalence per 1,000 children.

Children who were born in **2014** (3.7%) were **1.6x** as likely to receive an ASD diagnosis or ASD special education classification by 48 months of age compared to children born in **2010** (2.3%).



Cumulative incidence of ASD identified per 1000 children.

What are the key take-away messages?

- The percentage of children identified with ASD is higher in California compared to other sites where CDC tracks ASD for both 4-year-old and 8-year-old children.
- More children with ASD in California received their first diagnosis at a younger age compared to other sites. Additionally, the co-occurrence of intellectual disabilities is lower for both 4-year-old and 8-year-old children identified with ASD in California.
- Among 4-year-olds, Hispanic and Asian or Pacific Islander children were more likely to be identified with ASD than White children. Hispanic children were also more likely to be identified with ASD than Black children.
- There were no differences in the number of 8-year-old children identified with ASD across racial and ethnic groups.
- Differences exist in the percentages of boys and girls identified with ASD. However, this difference is smaller at younger ages, which may reflect differences in screening and diagnostic patterns.

How can this information be useful?

CA-ADDM's latest findings can be used to:

- Promote early identification of ASD.
- Plan for service needs of individuals with ASD and their families and provide trainings related to ASD to healthcare and education providers.
- Inform policies promoting improved outcomes in health care and education for individuals with ASD.
- Improve collaborations across the ASD community among providers, researchers, and families.

Partners in California might consider different ways to:

- Increase awareness of developmental monitoring among all racial and ethnic groups.
- Empower parents/caregivers to act early if there is concern about their child's development.
- Lower the age of first evaluation by community providers by identifying and addressing barriers to evaluation and diagnosis.

How and where was this information collected?

CA-ADDM uses a record review method. Specifically, this information is based on the analysis of data collected from the health and special education records of children who were 4 years old and 8 years old and living in parts of San Diego County in 2018.

8-year-old children in tracking area: 15,076 **4-year-old children in tracking area: 16,796**

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| • 24% White | • 30% White |
| • 9% Black | • 9% Black |
| • 52% Hispanic | • 47% Hispanic |
| • 14% Asian or Pacific Islander | • 14% Asian or Pacific Islander |
| • <1% American Indian or Alaska Native | • 1% American Indian or Alaska Native |

* Estimates may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

What else does CA-ADDM do besides provide estimates of ASD?

CA-ADDM collaborates with the California Department of Public Health, investigators from the University of California San Diego, and health, education, and early intervention systems that serve children with developmental disabilities and their families to understand the number and characteristics of 4-year-olds and 8-year-olds with ASD in select areas of California. Upon request, CA-ADDM offers workshops and trainings for local professionals and provides tailored data reports and presentations on the number and characteristics of children with ASD in California and across the ADDM Network. CA-ADDM works with interdisciplinary partners to identify ways the data can help improve our understanding of the needs of families in California. In addition, CA-ADDM works with clinical research groups to inform partners on scientific developments and promote innovative approaches to ASD identification in the community.

“CA-ADDM has given us a greater insight into the community we serve. As a school district, we can use this data to target the outreach and identification of students in order to more effectively provide early intervention services. It also provides a lens to help us find and partner with agencies in our community to ensure our students and families are accessing supports critical to their success at home and at school.”

**DEANN RAGSDALE, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services,
La Mesa-Spring Valley School District**

Resources

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES REGIONAL CENTERS

916-654-1690

www.dds.ca.gov/rc/

CALIFORNIA EARLY START

800-515-2229

www.dds.ca.gov/services/early-start/

FIRST FIVE CALIFORNIA

916-263-1050

www.cfcf.ca.gov/

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS

916-445-4613

www.cde.ca.gov/sp

UC SAN DIEGO AUTISM CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

858-534-6912

www.medschool.ucsd.edu/som/neurosciences/centers/autism/pages/default.aspx

NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR AUTISM RESEARCH

858-679-8800

www.nfar.org/what-we-do/parent-programs

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Fran Goldfarb

Michele Rogers

CA Act Early Ambassador

www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/ambassadors-list.html

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