

# A Snapshot of Autism Spectrum Disorder in Missouri

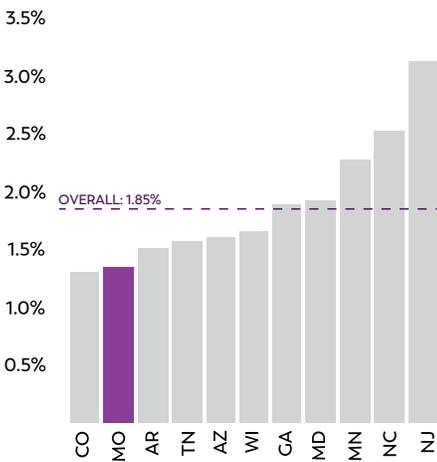
Findings from the Missouri Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (MO-ADDM) Project help increase understanding about the number of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), the characteristics of those children, and the age at which they are first evaluated and diagnosed.



■ SITE TRACKING AREA

## 1 in 74

Or 1.4% of 8-year-old children in St. Louis and St. Louis City counties were identified with ASD by the MO-ADDM Project in 2016



This percentage is lower than the average percentage identified with ASD (1.85%) in all communities in the United States where CDC tracked ASD in 2016.

## White children were more likely

To be identified with ASD than Hispanic children

## No significant differences

In ASD prevalence were found between white and black children

## By 56 months

Half of children identified with ASD were diagnosed

## Boys were 3x

More likely to be identified with ASD than girls



## 40% of children

Identified with ASD received a Comprehensive Developmental Evaluation by age 3 years



## 91% of children

Identified with ASD had a documented ASD diagnosis



## What are the key take-away messages?

- ASD prevalence was similar for white and black children, suggesting that previously reported differences between groups may be diminishing.
- Despite the national health priority that children with ASD have their first developmental evaluations by age 36 months, the age at which half of children were diagnosed remains largely unchanged.
- Continued efforts should be directed toward evaluating and diagnosing all children with ASD as early as possible so they can be connected to the services they need.
- ASD prevalence continues to be higher in boys than girls. The reasons for this observed difference warrant further investigation.

## How can this information be useful?

The MO-ADDM Project's latest findings can be used to:

- Promote early identification of ASD;
- Plan for the service needs of individuals with ASD and provide trainings related to ASD for healthcare providers and families;
- Guide future ASD research; and
- Inform policies promoting improved outcomes in health care and education for individuals with ASD.

Stakeholders in Missouri might consider different ways to lower the age of first evaluation and diagnosis by community providers.

## How and where was this information collected?

The MO-ADDM Project uses a record review method. Specifically, this information is based on the analysis of data collected from the health records of children who were 8 years old and living in one of two counties in Missouri in 2016.

### Tracking area

St. Louis, St. Louis City counties

### 8-year-old children in tracking area: 15,635

- 50% white
- 40% black
- 5% Hispanic
- 5% Asian or Pacific Islander

## What else does MO-ADDM do besides track ASD among 8-year-olds?

The MO-ADDM Project investigators at Washington University in St. Louis, in collaboration with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services and community partners, track the number and characteristics of 8-year-olds and 4-year-olds with ASD and 8-year-olds with cerebral palsy. In addition, the MO-ADDM Project conducts various ASD-related public health, research, and clinical activities to inform various stakeholders (such as clinicians, educators, and families) on the latest scientific developments, best practices for early intervention, and clinical care for children with ASD.

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“Early childhood is the most critical window for intervention success – especially for those with autism. ADDM data provides a “snapshot” of how many children have been identified in Missouri and what gaps in care need to be addressed. This information is critical to ensure that all Missouri children reach their greatest potential!”

**ALICIA BREWER CURRAN, Missouri's Act Early Ambassador, Mother of a child with autism**

## Resources

### DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION'S OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

573-751-5739

[dese.mo.gov/special-education](http://dese.mo.gov/special-education)

### DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH'S DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

[dmh.mo.gov/dd/](http://dmh.mo.gov/dd/)

### FIRST STEPS

1-866-583-2392

[www.mofirststeps.com/](http://www.mofirststeps.com/)

### MISSOURI FAMILIES FOR EFFECTIVE AUTISM TREATMENT

877-275-8988

[www.mo-feat.org/](http://www.mo-feat.org/)

### NAVIGATING AUTISM SERVICES

[https://dmh.mo.gov/media/pdf/navigating-autism-services-](https://dmh.mo.gov/media/pdf/navigating-autism-services-community-guide-missouri)

[community-guide-missouri](https://dmh.mo.gov/media/pdf/navigating-autism-services-community-guide-missouri)

### CONNECT WITH MO-ADDM

**Robert Fitzgerald, PhD, MPH**

Washington University in St. Louis

314-286-0151

[fitzgeraldr@wustl.edu](mailto:fitzgeraldr@wustl.edu)