

# Executive Summary

For more than two decades, CDC's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network has been tracking the number and characteristics of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other developmental disabilities in diverse communities throughout the United States.

## Key Findings At-A-Glance

These findings are based on the analysis of data collected from the health and special education records (if available) of 8-year-old children who lived in one of 11 different areas throughout the United States in 2016.

- The estimated percentage of 8-year-old children identified with ASD is higher than previous estimates from the ADDM Network.
- For the first time, ADDM Network data found no overall difference in the number of black children identified with autism compared to white children. However, the number of Hispanic children identified with autism is still lower compared to white or black children.
- Overall, progress has been made toward the [Healthy People 2020](#) goal of increasing the percentage of children with ASD who receive their first developmental evaluation by 36 months.
- More children who were born in 2012 received an ASD diagnosis by 4 years of age compared to children born in 2008.

## 1 in 54

### 8-year-old children identified with ASD in 2016

\*Based on tracking within 11 communities in the United States

The 2020 Community Report on Autism highlights the ADDM Network's most recent findings on ASD in 8-year-old children, showing that the estimated percentage of children identified with ASD is higher than in previous reports. In 8-year-old children, about 1.85%, or 1 in 54, were identified with ASD in 2016, based on tracking within 11 communities

in the United States. While these findings indicate that there continue to be many children living with ASD who need services and support, now and as they grow into adolescence and adulthood, they also offer good news that screening and awareness continue to identify children who will benefit from services.

- Knowing how many children have ASD is just part of the picture. While findings also show that significant progress has been made in reducing racial and ethnic disparities in the identification of ASD in children, CDC and its partners continue efforts to:
- Ensure that children are evaluated and diagnosed as soon as possible after developmental concerns are identified; and
- Promote efforts for early and equitable identification of ASD and timely enrollment in services.

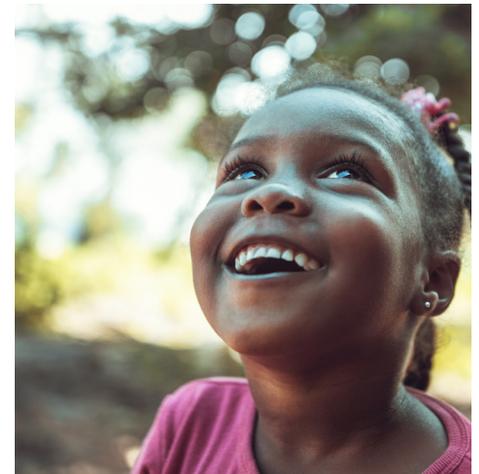
Service providers (such as healthcare organizations and

school systems), researchers, and policymakers can use ADDM Network findings to:

- Support service planning;
- Inform policies that promote improved outcomes in health care and education; and
- Guide research on risk and protective factors for ASD and the interventions that can help children with ASD succeed.

Together, those who work with or on behalf of children—from healthcare providers to educators to community advocates—can ensure that all children with ASD are identified and connected to the services they need as early as possible.

CDC will continue tracking the number and characteristics of children with ASD, researching risk and protective factors for ASD, and promoting early identification—the most powerful tool we have now for making a difference in the lives of children with ASD—through CDC’s [Learn the Signs. Act Early.](#) program.



## The ADDM Network’s goals are to



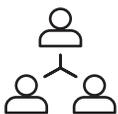
Obtain as complete a count as possible (also known as prevalence) of the number of children with ASD in each ADDM Network area and identify changes in prevalence over time;



Provide information on the characteristics of children with ASD, including sex, race/ethnicity, whether or not intellectual disability is present, and age of evaluation and diagnosis;



Determine whether ASD is more common in some groups of children than among others (for example, among boys versus girls), and if those differences are changing over time; and



Understand the impact of ASD and related conditions upon children, families, and communities in the United States.