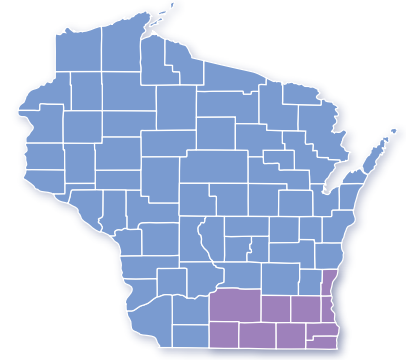


# A Snapshot of Autism Spectrum Disorder in Wisconsin



Findings from the Wisconsin Surveillance of Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities System (WISADDS) help us 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. Read on to learn more about ASD in Wisconsin and how this important information can be useful to you.

About 1 in 92 or 1.1% of 8-year-old children was identified with ASD by WISADDS in 2012. This percentage is lower than the average percentage identified with ASD (1.5%) in all communities in the United States where CDC tracked ASD in 2012.



Boys were more likely to be identified with ASD than girls. White children were more likely to be identified with ASD than black or Hispanic children.

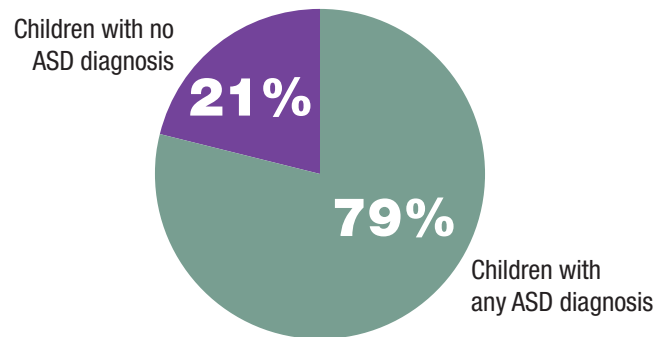
**4.2x** MORE LIKELY among boys vs girls

**2.1x** MORE LIKELY among white vs black children

**1.6x** MORE LIKELY among white vs Hispanic children

\* No significant differences between black and Hispanic children

Most of the children identified by WISADDS as having ASD had a diagnosis of ASD documented in their health records. The remaining children had documented symptoms of ASD, but had not yet been diagnosed with ASD by a community provider.



About 90% of children identified with ASD had concerns about their development noted in their health records by age 3 years.



About 42% of children identified with ASD received a comprehensive developmental evaluation by age 3 years.



About half of children were diagnosed with ASD by a community provider by age 4 years and 2 months, even though ASD can be diagnosed as early as age 2 years.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## *What are the key take-away messages?*

- Many children are living with ASD who need services and support, now and as they grow into adolescence and adulthood.
- The percentage of children with ASD increased in southeastern Wisconsin, from about 0.9% in 2010 to about 1.1% in 2012.
- Hispanic and black children are less likely to be identified with ASD than white children. This may reflect cultural and/or socioeconomic differences, such as delayed or lack of access to services, as compared to white children in Wisconsin.
- Despite the developmental concerns noted in many of the children's records by age 3 years, less than half of children identified with ASD received a comprehensive developmental evaluation by this same age. The lag between first concern and first developmental evaluation may affect when children are being diagnosed and connected to the services they need.

## *How can this information be useful?*

WISADDS' latest findings can be used to promote early identification of ASD, plan for ASD services and training, guide future ASD research, and inform policies promoting improved outcomes in health care and education for individuals with ASD. Stakeholders in Wisconsin might consider different ways to

1. Lower the age of first evaluation by community providers.
2. Increase awareness of ASD among Hispanic and black families, and identify and address barriers in order to decrease the age at which Hispanic and black children are evaluated and diagnosed.

## *How and where was this information collected?*

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 10 counties (Dane, Green, Jefferson, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Rock, Walworth, Waukesha) in southeastern Wisconsin in 2012. Overall, the tracking area included 35,556 8-year-olds (61% white, 18% black, 16% Hispanic, 4% Asian or Pacific Islander, less than 1% American Indian or Alaska Native).

## *What else does WISADDS do besides tracking ASD among 8-year-olds?*

WISADDS collaborates with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and investigators from the University of Wisconsin-Madison to track the number and characteristics of 8-year-olds with ASD, cerebral palsy, and/or intellectual disability. WISADDS also tracks the number and characteristics of 4-year-olds with ASD. WISADDS facilitates training and provides access to materials related to developmental disabilities for professionals.

**“The WISADDS data are important to me as a parent because they convey what families across the state are experiencing. These data have been invaluable as we respond to the need for early identification, access to diagnostic services, and professional training. For example, seeing the data on disparities in identification has given us valuable insight into which children we may be missing.”**

**-Gail Chodron, PhD  
Wisconsin's Act Early Ambassador**

## *Get Resources and Connect Families to Services and Support in Wisconsin*

### **Autism Society of Wisconsin**

1-888-4-AUTISM

[www.asw4autism.org](http://www.asw4autism.org)

### **Birth to Three Program, Wisconsin Department of Health Services**

[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/birthto3/index.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/birthto3/index.htm)

### **Finding Your Way**

[www.waisman.wisc.edu/cedd/pdfs/products/community/FYW\\_e.pdf](http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/cedd/pdfs/products/community/FYW_e.pdf)

### **Learn the Signs. Act Early.**

[www.ActEarly.wisc.edu](http://www.ActEarly.wisc.edu)

### **Wisconsin First Step**

1-800-642-7837

[www.mch-hotlines.org/wisconsin-first-step](http://www.mch-hotlines.org/wisconsin-first-step)

### **Connect with WISADDS**

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