

Intellectual Disability Among Children

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducts the Metropolitan Atlanta Developmental Disabilities Surveillance Program (MADDSP), which is one of the few programs in the world that conducts active, ongoing monitoring of the number of children with intellectual disability in a large, demographically diverse metropolitan area.

FACT: About 11 to 15 of every 1,000 school-aged children in metropolitan Atlanta have intellectual disability.

Intellectual disability is characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This developmental disability originates before a child is 18 years of age. For most children with intellectual disability the cause is not known. The average lifetime cost associated with intellectual disability was about \$1,014,000 per person in 2003 dollars.

MADDSP monitors the number of 8-year-old children living in the five-county metropolitan Atlanta area who have one or more of the following five developmental disabilities: intellectual disability, hearing loss, vision impairment, cerebral palsy, and autism spectrum disorder. For monitoring purposes, MADDSP defines intellectual disability among 8-year-old children by the presence of a score on the most recent test of intellectual functioning that falls in the significantly below average range (standard age score of 70 or below). In 2006, an estimated 11.4 per 1,000 8-year-old children in metropolitan Atlanta, or 1 in 91, had intellectual disability. Of these children, 48% also had one or more of the other developmental disabilities monitored by MADDSP.

MADDSP provides opportunities for special studies through which CDC staff members can identify risk factors for these disabilities and determine whether programs to prevent disabilities (for example, newborn metabolic screening) have been effective.

Related CDC Activities

- The Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network monitors the number and characteristics of children with autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, or cerebral palsy in multiple U.S. communities.
- Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) surveillance programs monitor the number of children with FAS.
- The Metropolitan Atlanta Developmental Disabilities Study (MADDSP) Follow-Up Study of Young Adults followed a subset of children identified in MADDSP who had vision impairment, hearing loss, intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, or epilepsy, or a combination thereof. The study assessed participants' current functioning and their transition to adulthood, as measured by employment, education after high school, and living arrangements. It also examined their mental and physical health and their lifestyles and behaviors.
- The National Health Interview Survey examines health status and health care among children with intellectual disability.

To read more about CDC's publications related to intellectual disability, visit www.cdc.gov/intellectualdisabilities.



National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities
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