



## New Jersey Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Project

**The Autism and Developmental Disorders Monitoring Network (ADDM Network).** The CDC supports researchers in seventeen states to develop autism monitoring programs. The goal of the ADDM Network is to provide comparable, population-based, estimates of autism prevalence in different sites over time. For more information please refer to: [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dd/ddautism.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dd/ddautism.htm).

**The New Jersey Autism Study (NJAS)** is a multiple-source public health investigation to determine and monitor the number of children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This epidemiologic study will help establish, for the first time, an accurate baseline count of the number of New Jersey children with autism starting in the year 2000. A report from the year 2002 will also be available. The NJAS investigators are members of the ADDM Network and are based at the New Jersey Medical School. This study is a collaborative undertaking of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), New Jersey Medical School, and numerous New Jersey clinical and education professionals

**What parts of New Jersey is included in the New Jersey Autism Study?** This public health investigation is being implemented in Essex, Union, Hudson and Ocean Counties.

**How many babies are born each year in this part of New Jersey?** Approximately, 35,000 infants are born in this four county area, each year.

**How many children between the ages of 3-21 are classified as having autism by the New Jersey Department of Education?** According to recent data, 6,488 children in New Jersey are classified with autism.

**What is the age of the children in the study?** During the initial phase of this study, 8-year-old children in the NJAS region will be the focus of monitoring.

**How common are autism spectrum disorders (ASD) among children who live in New Jersey?** A CDC study (Bertrand, 2000) found that 6.7 of every 1,000 children in Brick Township had an ASD in 1998. It is not known if the prevalence of autism determined in Brick Township constitutes a cluster or whether it reflects the rate of autism in other parts of the state. The New Jersey Autism Study (NJAS) will address this question and will implement autism monitoring over time to determine whether the rate of autism is changing.

**What kinds of education and training programs will the project offer to people who work with children who have ASD?** NJAS has supported training of New Jersey Clinicians in use of the Autism Diagnostic Interview and the Autism Diagnostic Observation Scale.

**Does the NJAS have any special studies on autism?** The New Jersey Answers for Autism Survey (Survey) is a complement to autism monitoring by NJAS. The Survey is a comprehensive autism registry. Goals of the Survey include identification of autism risk factors, delineation of specific subtypes or variants of autism, and longitudinal study of autism and related disorders. Information derived from the Survey may lead to better treatments for autism and development of methods to cure or prevent autism. The Survey is open to parents of autistic children or to adults with an ASD. Survey enrollment is limited to New Jersey residents.

**What are some of the other programs in New Jersey that work with children with ASD and their families?** The New Jersey Autism Study cooperates with the Center for Outreach and Services for the Autism Community (COSAC) and the Statewide Parents Advocacy Network (SPAN). These organizations provide excellent information and referral services to families affected by an Autism Spectrum Disorder. To reach COSAC, call (800) 4-AUTISM or contact <http://www.nicosac.org>. To reach SPAN, contact (800) 654-SPAN or <http://www.spannj.org>.

Two important, federally-funded, autism studies are underway in our state. The New Jersey Language and Autism Genetics Study (NJLAGS) is investigating possible genetic links between autism and language-based learning disorders. To learn about this study, contact (973) 972-8277. The Center for Childhood Neurotoxicology and Exposure Assessment is researching the possible relations between environmental neurotoxicants and autism. To learn about this research, please contact (732) 445-0174.

**Are there any laws or statutes in New Jersey that have to do with ASD?** In 1999, the New Jersey Legislature passed a law (NJ A-1970/S-1133) that formed the New Jersey Governor's Council on Autism. The Council supports biomedical research on autism by New Jersey scientists and fosters the education and training of professionals working with autistic persons. For more information about the Council, please call (732) 235-9524 or contact: <http://www.njautismcouncil.org>.

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