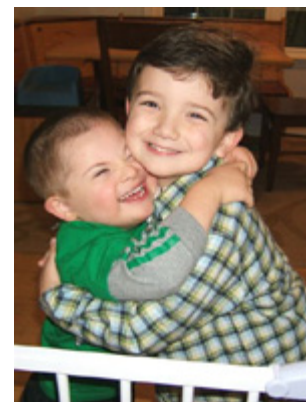




Intellectual Disabilities Among Children

FACT: *About 12 to 16 of every 1,000 school-age children in metropolitan Atlanta has an intellectual disability (standard cognitive score of 70 or below).*

Children with intellectual disabilities have significant limitations in intellectual functioning. These limitations can cause problems in school, work, and leisure activities, social and communication skills, and activities of daily living. The cause of most intellectual disabilities is not known. But, some of the most common known causes include genetic disorders, such as Down syndrome or fragile X syndrome; and environmental factors, such as alcohol exposure before birth, which can cause fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). Intellectual disabilities caused by certain infectious diseases (such as rubella) and metabolic disorders (such as phenylketonuria, or PKU) have decreased as the result of widespread use of childhood vaccines and increased newborn screening. The average lifetime cost associated with intellectual disabilities was about \$1,014,000 per person (in 2003 dollars).



CDC's Metropolitan Atlanta Developmental Disabilities Surveillance Program (MADDSP) is one of the few programs in the world that actively tracks the number of children with intellectual disabilities in a large, diverse metropolitan area over time.

MADDSP tracks the number of school-age children living in five counties of metro Atlanta who have intellectual disabilities, hearing loss, vision impairment, cerebral palsy, and/or autism spectrum disorders. For the purposes of tracking, MADDSP defines intellectual disabilities in 8-year-old children by the presence of a score of 70 or below on the most recent test of intellectual functioning. In 1996, an estimated 16 per 1,000 8-year-old children in metro Atlanta, or about 1 in 63, had an intellectual disability. In 2000, the prevalence was an estimated 12 per 1,000, or 1 in 83, 8-year-olds. In 1996 and 2000, respectively, 29% and 35% of children with intellectual disabilities also had one or more other developmental disabilities tracked by MADDSP.

MADDSP also allows CDC and other researchers to do special studies to identify risk factors for these disabilities and determine whether efforts to prevent disabilities have been effective.

Related CDC Activities

- The Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Program tracked the number of children with autism spectrum disorders and intellectual disabilities in five sites in 2002 and four sites in 2006.
- Fetal alcohol syndrome surveillance programs track the number of children with FAS in five states.
- CDC works with vaccine programs to prevent infectious diseases that may cause intellectual disabilities.
 - Community-based studies are exploring effective ways that parents can help improve developmental outcomes for their children.
 - The Metropolitan Atlanta Developmental Disabilities Study (MADDS) Follow-up Study of Young Adults followed a subset of children identified by the study who had vision impairment, hearing loss, intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, and/or epilepsy to assess their 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.
 - Using data from the National Health Interview Survey, researchers are examining health status and health care use among children with intellectual disabilities.

Promoting the health of babies, children, and adults, and enhancing the potential for full, productive living.

1.888.232.5929
www.cdc.gov/ncbddd

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

Department of Health and Human Services