

California Center of Excellence for Autism and Developmental Disabilities Research and Epidemiology



The Children's Health Act of 2000 directed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to establish regional centers of excellence for autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) and other developmental disabilities. CDC is now funding **Centers of Excellence for Autism and Developmental Disabilities Research and Epidemiology (CADDRE)** in California, Colorado, Maryland/Delaware, and Pennsylvania. For information: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dd/ddautism.htm>

The California Department of Health Services conducts the CADDRE program in California. The following counties are included: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara.

The California center will conduct four major projects:

Monitoring activities

Currently, we do not know how many children living in California have an ASD. We do know that, of California children born during 1990-1997, more than 11,000 are enrolled with the California Department of Developmental Services to receive services for autism. Most of these children are classified as having autism under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA is the federal law that supports special education and related services for children and youth with disabilities.

During the 2000-2001 school year, 10,889 children 3-11 years of age in California were classified as having autism under IDEA. However, there are additional children with ASDs who are classified in other disability categories under IDEA. There are also other children with ASDs who are in regular education classes, who attend private school, or who are home schooled.

The California center will use multiple sources to obtain a more complete estimate of the number of children in the project area with an ASD. The center will study whether ASD is more common in some groups of children than in others and whether the number of children with ASDs is changing over time. The monitoring activities will focus on children 8 years old.

Combined Centers Study

The California center will work with the other CADDRE programs to find causes of ASDs or factors that make it more likely that a child will have an ASD. Families who take part in the study will answer survey questions, children with ASDs will be tested, and staff will look at medical records from when the children were born. Children ages 3-5 years will be included in the Combined Centers Study.

Special Studies

The California center is particularly interested in identifying biomarkers for early identification of children with autism. The first project will be a study focusing on biomarkers in newborn blood specimens from children who are later diagnosed with autism. We will also gather information to help us understand how autism is experienced in culturally specific communities.

Sharing Information

The California center will share what is learned from these studies through mailings to ASD support groups and families, the media, and professional organizations. Information will also be shared through conferences, scientific publications, and the center's Web site.

For further information or to receive our newsletter, please contact:

Nila Rogosin, Health Educator
California Department of Health Services
1515 Clay Street, Suite 1700
Oakland, CA 94612

Phone: (510) 622-4600
Fax: (510) 622-4505
email: autism@dhs.ca.gov



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

1.888.232.5929
www.cdc.gov/ncbddd

Department of Health and Human Services