



## Alabama Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Project

**The Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is now funding researchers in many states, including Alabama, to develop programs to monitor the prevalence of autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) and other developmental disabilities. The goal of the ADDM Network is to provide comparable, population-based estimates of the prevalence rates of autism and related disorders in different sites over time. For more information, please see: [www.cdc.gov/autism](http://www.cdc.gov/autism)

**The Alabama Autism Surveillance Program (AASP)** is a multiple-source investigation to determine and monitor the number of children who resided in a portion of Alabama in 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008, and who had an ASD and/or cerebral palsy (CP). This surveillance system will help establish, for the first time, an accurate count of the number of children in Alabama with these developmental disabilities. The investigators are members of the Department of Maternal and Child Health and the School of Public Health at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, working as agents of the Alabama Department of Public Health. The AASP is a joint undertaking with the CDC and other state partners, the Alabama State Department of Education, and many other agencies and organizations that serve children with ASDs and their families.

**What part of Alabama is included in the Alabama Autism Study?** The study presently encompasses the northern 32 counties in Alabama but could expand to cover the entire state in the future. About 36,000 babies are born in this area each year.

**What is the age of the children in the study?** This study currently focuses on children 8 years of age, with plans to include children from 3 through 10 years of age in the future.

**How many people 3–21 years of age are classified as having autism by the Alabama Department of Education?** In the 2004–2005 school year, 1,756 students were classified as having autism and received special education services. That number was 0.24% of the 734,058 children enrolled in Alabama public schools on December 1, 2004.

**How common are autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) among children who live in Alabama?** Data available from AASP from the 2002 study year found that 3.3 per 1,000 children had an ASD. This resulted in 116 eight year old children being identified with an ASD within the Alabama study area.

**What kinds of education and training programs will the project offer to people who work with children who have ASDs?** Study staff will provide workshops to teachers and primary health care providers to increase recognition of the early signs of ASDs and to enhance their ability to identify and diagnose ASDs, including childhood autism, Asperger's syndrome, atypical autism, and pervasive developmental disorder.

**What are some of the other programs in Alabama that work with children with ASDs and their families?** The Autism Society of Alabama (ASA) is a nonprofit, community-based organization dedicated to advocacy, community education, and support for families.

**Do study staff work with any other monitoring programs in the state?** Efforts to collaborate with the south Alabama registry to expand into a statewide birth defects surveillance program have begun.

**Do any laws or statutes in Alabama have to do with identifying children with ASD?**  
Not at present.

*For further information, please contact*

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