



Pennsylvania Autism & Developmental Disabilities Surveillance Program

The Autism and Developmental Disorders Monitoring Network (ADDM Network). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is funding researchers in many states, including Pennsylvania, 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

The Pennsylvania Autism and Developmental Disabilities Surveillance Program (PADDSP) is a multiple-source public health program established to determine and monitor the number of 8-year-old children in the population with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This surveillance system will help establish, for the first time, an accurate count of the number of Pennsylvania children and families affected by these disorders. The investigators are members of the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. PADDSP is studying sequential years to identify if there are any trends in the diagnosis and treatment of ASD.

What part of Pennsylvania is included in PADDSP? The program will include the entire county of Philadelphia.

How many people 3-21 years of age are classified as having autism by the Pennsylvania Department of Education? The most recent school year reported from the department is 2004-2005. During this year in Pennsylvania there were 708 8-year-olds enrolled in special education receiving autism services and 7042 children aged 6-21. Specific to Philadelphia County, 66 children aged 8 were receiving services for autism and 755 aged 6-21.

How common are ASDs among children who live in Pennsylvania? Data available from PADDSP for the 2002 study year found that 5.3 per 1,000 children had an ASD. This resulted in 111 8-year-old children being identified with an ASD within the Pennsylvania study area.

What kinds of education and training programs will the project offer to people who work with children who have ASDs and other developmental disabilities? The Pennsylvania center plans a program of education and outreach to inform health care providers, educators, and the community about the need to monitor the prevalence of ASD and the educational and health care needs of children with ASD and their families.

What are some of the resources available in Pennsylvania for children with developmental disabilities and their families? The Pennsylvania center is interested in studying genetic and environmental factors and their roles in causing ASDs. The Pennsylvania Center is also interested in how children are screened at an early age for signs of an ASD, and how they are referred for diagnosis and treatment. Screening children may begin as early as 18 to 24 months of age for signs of developmental delay, including ASD. After a child is diagnosed as having an ASD, the Pennsylvania center will study ways to help parents deal with the issues that arise as they seek medical and other treatments as well as educational and other services for their child.

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