



DHDD Newsletter – January 2021



A Note from the DHDD Director:

Dear DHDD colleagues –

As we enter 2021, I am looking forward to the time when the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed. We are working and living in unprecedented times and have all been affected by the pandemic in both our work and personal life. Despite the challenges the pandemic has brought to DHDD's work, we have persevered and ensured that our valuable work continues.

I have once again been asked to deploy to the COVID-19 response. I will be assisting the Georgia Department of Health as Chief Medical Officer from February 1 through May 2. In this capacity, I will be working under the State Health Officer, Dr. Kathleen Toomey, on improving vaccine distribution and administration, and select other projects. I am thankful and honored to have this opportunity to be able to continue to contribute to COVID-19 response efforts.

DHDD's Associate Director for Science, Dr. Blythe Ryerson, will supporting DHDD as Acting Director during this time. I am fully confident that DHDD's work will continue to move forward during my deployment.

Thank you again for your support and hard work.

Take care and stay well,
Georgina

In the Spotlight

Meet Dr. Catherine Rice, New Disability and Health Promotion Branch Chief

DHDD is pleased to welcome Catherine (Cathy) Rice, PhD, to the role of Branch Chief for the Disability and Health Promotion Branch which includes the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention team, Disability Science and Program team, and Children's Preparedness Unit. A developmental psychologist by training, Dr. Rice most recently served as Director of the Emory Autism Center (EAC) and Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Emory University.

Previously, Dr. Rice spent 14 years as a Behavioral Scientist and Epidemiologist with NCBDDD. Her work included the establishment of the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network to estimate autism prevalence and describe the population of children with autism in multiple areas of the United States.

Dr. Rice received her undergraduate degree in Psychology from Emory University and her doctorate in Developmental Psychology from Boston College. She is a licensed psychologist in the state of Georgia and conducts specialized training on the assessment of autism.

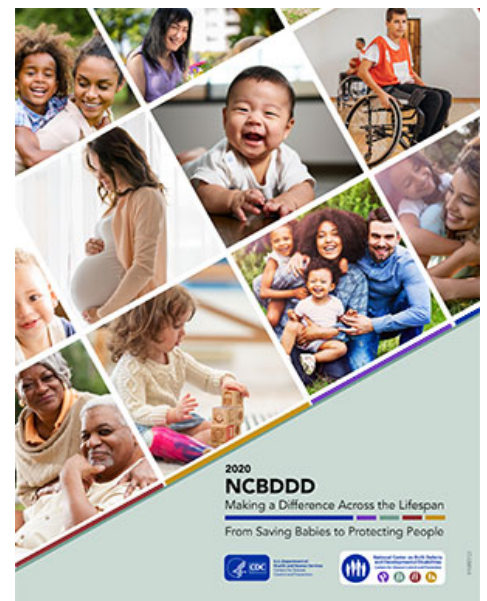


NCBDDD's Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report

The [NCBDDD's Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report](#) is a compilation of NCBDDD's notable and significant achievements by thematic area over the past fiscal year, including future directions, scientific publications, our budget, and state funding.

Thematic areas covered in the report include:

- [Saving Babies through Surveillance, Research, and Prevention of Birth Defects and Infant Disorders](#)
- [Helping Children Live to the Fullest by Understanding Developmental Disabilities](#)
- [Protecting People and Preventing Complications of Blood Disorders](#)
- [Improving Health of People with Disabilities](#)



People with Down Syndrome are now considered at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19

On December 23, [Down Syndrome](#) was added to the list of [conditions](#) associated with increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Recent studies show that people with Down Syndrome were more likely to experience severe outcomes related to COVID-19, including hospitalization, sepsis, mechanical ventilation, and death. This is the case even after adjusting for conditions known or suspected to be associated with both Down Syndrome and risk of severe outcomes in COVID-19, including congenital heart disease, obesity, and dementia.

CDC recommends that initial supplies of COVID-19 vaccine be allocated to healthcare personnel and long-term care facility residents (phase 1a). Frontline essential workers, people aged 75 years and older (phase 1b), and **people 65 – 74 years, people aged 16—64 years with underlying high-risk medical conditions**, and other essential workers (**phase 1c**) should be vaccinated next. Each state is implementing vaccinations according to their own plans.

Learn more about [CDC's recommendations for COVID-19 vaccine](#).



The importance of flu vaccination for people with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic

In a time when both seasonal influenza viruses and SARS-CoV-2 are circulating, a new [CDC commentary](#) published in the *Disability and Health Journal* examines the critical importance of ensuring that people who are eligible receive the flu vaccine in order to protect their health and the health of others around them. It is particularly important this season to ensure flu vaccine access to children and adults with disabilities and their caregivers and that vaccine messages are communicated effectively to people with different types of disabilities.

[Read the Commentary](#)



COVID-19 Webinar Series – GA Tech Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation

Georgia Institute of Technology's [Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation](#), the [CDC Foundation](#), and DHDD are collaborating on a free webinar series to provide information to supplement CDC's COVID-19 considerations for people with disabilities. You can register for the last webinar on the series by clicking on the link below.

[A Closer Look: Guidance for Business and Employers Considering the Needs of People with Disabilities during COVID-19](#)

- Wednesday February 10, 2021 at 2:00 PM

Registration will close one hour before the live webinar.

Participants will qualify for CEUs through the AAC Institute and CRCs through the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC).

Recordings of past webinars in this series, including *Face Masks and People with Disabilities*, *Mental Health and Resilience within the Disability Community*, and *Making Social Media Accessible for People with Disabilities* can be found [here](#).

New Resources

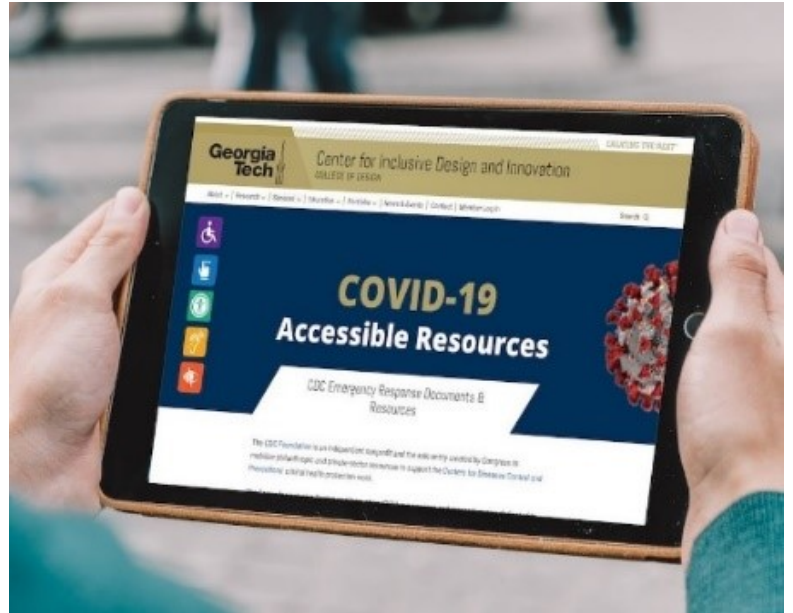


COVID-19 Accessible Materials

[Easy-to-Read COVID-19 Safety resources](#) are now available on the CDC website, and [ASL \(American Sign Language\)](#) videos are available on the CDC YouTube channel.

These resources are available thanks to the COVID-19 Accessible Materials and Culturally Relevant Messages for Individuals with Disabilities Project, led by Georgia Tech's Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation (CIDI). This is a CDC Foundation-funded communications initiative to which CDC provides technical assistance. The project aims to deliver essential COVID-19 information in [Braille](#), American Sign Language (ASL), simplified text, and [other alternative formats](#) to people with disabilities, their families, and caregivers.

More videos will be added in the coming weeks, so check available resources periodically!



Publications

Impairment in Children with Tourette Syndrome and ADHD

A new study, published in the *Child Psychiatry and Human Development Journal* by researchers from DHDD, looked at how having Tourette syndrome, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), or both together can impact children's lives. The findings showed that children who had both ADHD and Tourette syndrome had the most difficulties, such as problems with school, social relationships, and with participating in recreational activities, compared with having Tourette syndrome or ADHD alone. Families of children with Tourette syndrome and ADHD also reported that their child's condition caused financial problems and impacted their ability to work.



Looking closely at how each disorder can impact a child might inform where they need the most help and support.

[Read more about this study](#)

[Learn more about CDC's work on Tourette syndrome](#)

[Learn more about CDC's work on ADHD](#)

Housing Quality and Child Health

Using the *Survey of Income and Program Participation*, new research examined poor housing quality – defined as whether the home had holes in the floor, cracks in the ceiling, plumbing issues, and/or pest problems – and child health. Children living in homes with poor housing quality were more likely to have poor health and to have more medical visits.



[Read more about this study](#)

[Learn more about child development](#)

Research Findings from CDC's Study to Explore Early Development

Association between pica and gastrointestinal symptoms in preschoolers with and without autism spectrum disorder, Study to Explore Early Development

A new report from the [Study to Explore Early Development](#) published in the *Disability and Health Journal* highlights gastrointestinal symptoms as an important adverse effect of pica in children with and without autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and developmental disabilities (DDs). However, pica does not fully explain the increased risk for gastrointestinal symptoms among children with ASD and DDs. These findings inform the specialized healthcare needs of children with ASD and other DDs.

[Read the article.](#)



Pica Associated with Autism and Other Disabilities, Study to Explore Early Development

This *Pediatrics* report from the [Study to Explore Early Development](#) suggests that pica may be common in preschoolers with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), ASD characteristics and/or intellectual disability. Pediatricians and parents should be aware of the potential for pica among this population of children and that they may benefit from careful monitoring and safety precautions to prevent pica, including behavioral therapy. A video abstract was created to accompany this report and is located on the Pediatrics site.

[Read the article and see a short video to learn more about this study.](#)



Gastrointestinal Symptoms in 2- to 5-Year-Old Children in the Study to Explore Early Development

This report from the [Study to Explore Early Development](#) published in the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* found that children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) had a higher frequency of gastrointestinal symptoms than children with other developmental disabilities and children from the general population. These findings have implications for clinical management. Researchers also compared children with ASD who had lost skills (developmental regression) with those who had not and found that more children with ASD with developmental regression had GI symptoms (43%) compared to those without regression (32%). Addressing GI problems in children with ASD is an important component of health care needs in this population.



[Read the scientific summary.](#)

A Distinct Three-Factor Structure of Restricted and Repetitive Behaviors in an Epidemiologically Sound Sample of Preschool-Age Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

This report on the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* based on data from the [Study to Explore Early Development](#) found that the presentation of restricted and repetitive behaviors may be distinct for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) between approximately 3 to 6 years of age. Specifically, repetitive speech may be more clinically relevant for young children than older children because language skills increase during the preschool years. Better understanding these symptoms could aid earlier diagnosis of ASD and lead to earlier delivery of intervention services.

[Read the scientific summary.](#)

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DHDD'S mission is to lead inclusive programs to optimize the health and development of children and adults with, or at risk for, disabilities.



National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities
Division of Human Development & Disability

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Page last reviewed: January 29, 2021

Content source: [National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)