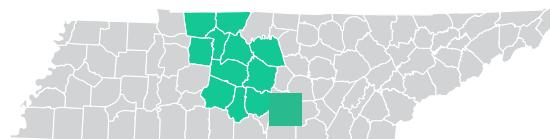


A Snapshot of Autism Spectrum Disorder in

Tennessee

Findings from the Tennessee Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network (TN-ADDM) help us to understand more about the number of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), the characteristics of those children and the age at which they are first evaluated and diagnosed.

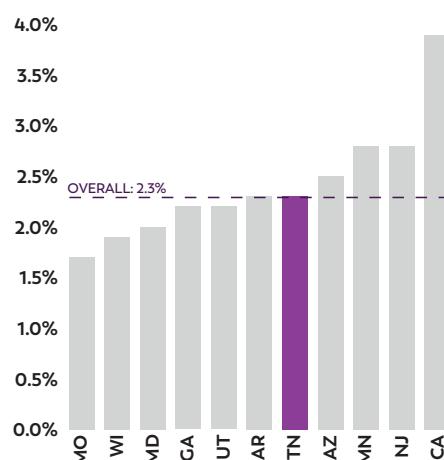


SITE TRACKING AREA

Among 8-year-olds Among 4-year-olds

About 1 in 44

Or **2.3%** % of children were identified with ASD by TN-ADDM in 2018



This percentage is the same as the overall percentage identified with ASD (2.3%) in all communities where CDC tracked ASD among 8-year-olds in 2018.

By 3 years of age

41% of **8-year-old** children identified with ASD received a comprehensive developmental evaluation



By 4 years of age

Black children were **1.3x** as likely and Hispanic children were **1.5x as likely** to be identified with ASD as White children



Values indicate prevalence per 1,000 children.

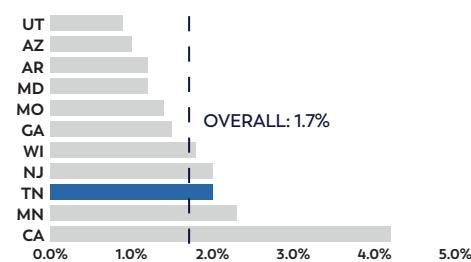
By 3 years of age

68% of **4-year-old** children identified with ASD received a comprehensive developmental evaluation



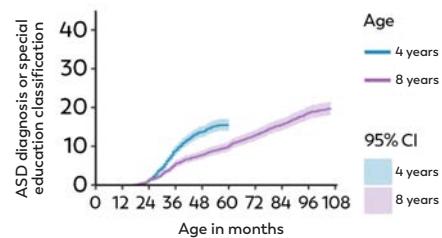
About 1 in 51

Or **2.0%** of **4-year-old** children were identified with ASD by TN-ADDM in 2018



This percentage is higher than the overall percentage identified with ASD (1.7%) in all communities where CDC tracked ASD among 4-year-olds in 2018.

Children who were born in **2014** (1.4%) were **1.7x as likely** to receive an ASD diagnosis or ASD special education classification by 48 months of age compared to children born in **2010** (0.8%)



Cumulative incidence of ASD identified per 1000 children.

What are the key take-way messages?

- There are many children living with ASD who need services and support. The number of 8-year-old children identified with ASD in the area covered by TN-ADDM increased from 1 in 68 (1.5%) in 2014, to 1 in 64 (1.6%) in 2016, to 1 in 44 (2.3%) in 2018.
- Although an increasing number of children with ASD in Tennessee (41% of 8-year-olds; 68% of 4-year-olds) are initially evaluated prior to 3 years of age, a majority of children are still diagnosed at later ages (median age of diagnosis was 53 months of age among 8-year-old children with ASD).
- This is the first-time data has been available in Tennessee for 4-year-olds. About 1 in 51 (or 2%) of 4-year-old children were identified with ASD by TN-ADDM in 2018.
- In Tennessee, Black children and Hispanic children were more likely to be identified with ASD by 4-years-of-age than White children. This may reflect improved service and advocacy efforts targeting traditionally underserved communities, and the ADDM surveillance methods that better capture ASD.
- The increasing number of children identified with ASD in Tennessee may be tied to complex factors related to awareness and capacity for service.

How can this information be useful?

TN-ADDM's findings can be used to:

- Inform policies that promote earlier identification of ASD.
- Plan for ASD services and training across the lifespan.
- Increase awareness of ASD among traditionally underserved families.

Partners in Tennessee might consider different ways to:

- Continue to lower the age of first evaluation by community providers.
- Increase awareness of need for services and intervention opportunities for the growing number of Black and Hispanic children identified with ASD.
- Work to identify opportunities and address barriers to build capacity for systems of care to meet the needs of individuals with ASD and their families.

How and where was this information collected?

TN-ADDM uses a record review method. Specifically, this information is based on the analysis of data collected from the health and special education records of children who were 4 years old and 8 years old and living in one of 11 counties in Middle Tennessee in 2018.

Tracking area

Bedford, Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Marshall, Maury, Montgomery, Rutherford, Robertson, Williamson, and Wilson counties

8-year-old children in tracking area: 25,237

- 63% White
- 20% Black
- 14% Hispanic
- 3% Asian or Pacific Islander
- <1% American Indian or Alaska Native

4-year-old children in tracking area: 25,335

- 64% White
- 19% Black
- 14% Hispanic
- 3% Asian or Pacific Islander
- <1% American Indian or Alaska Native

*Estimates may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

"Year after year, we are seeing more children diagnosed with autism. The encouraging news is that these children are getting diagnosed earlier, and that is thanks to partners like Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders (TRIAD) and all early intervention professionals across the state. The earlier the diagnosis, the quicker our providers can start working with children and their families. Together, we will help them reach their goals and these children will have the childhood they deserve. A childhood that is defined by their own greatness."

BRAD TURNER
DIDD Commissioner

Resources

VANDERBILT KENNEDY CENTER (VKC)

<https://vkc.vumc.org/vkc/>

TREATMENT AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS (TRIAD)

<https://vkc.vumc.org/vkc/triad/home>

TENNESSEE DISABILITY PATHFINDER

1-800-640-4636

<https://www.tnpathfinder.org/>

TENNESSEE EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM

1-800-852-7157

www.tn.gov/education/early-learning/tennessee-early-intervention-system-teis.html

AUTISM TENNESSEE

615-270-2077

<https://autismtennessee.wildapricot.org/>

CDC'S LEARN THE SIGNS. ACT EARLY.

Toni Whitaker

Tennessee's Act Early Ambassador
www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/ambassadors-list.html

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