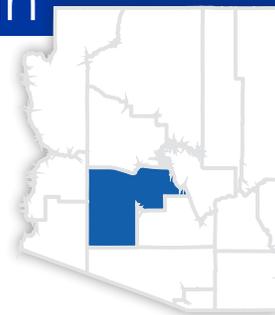


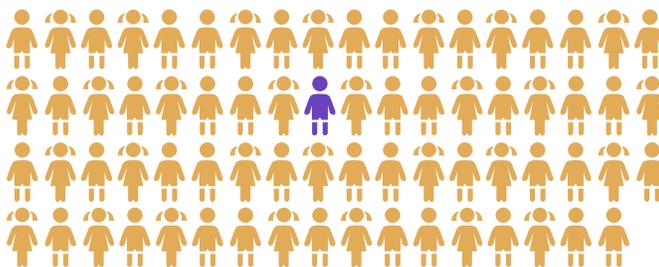
# A Snapshot of Autism Spectrum Disorder in

## Arizona

Findings from the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Surveillance Program (ADDSP) 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.



**1.4%**  
is slightly lower than the average percentage identified with ASD in 2014  
**1.7% in all ADDM sites**



**1 in 71**  
8-year-old children were identified with ASD by ADDSP in 2014

### Disparities in Identification

Boys were more likely to be identified with ASD than girls. White or black non-Hispanic children were more likely to be identified with ASD than Hispanic children.

**3.2x**  
MORE LIKELY

among boys vs girls

**1.6x**  
MORE LIKELY

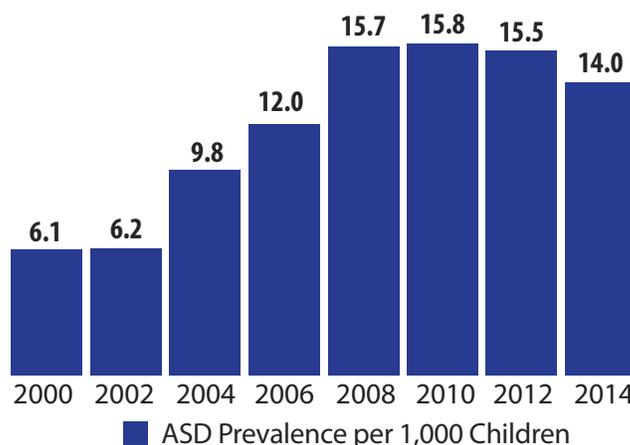
among white vs Hispanic children

**1.9x**  
MORE LIKELY

among black vs Hispanic children

### Prevalence in Arizona

In **2000**, an estimated **1 in 154 children (0.6%)** were identified with ASD. By **2008**, this number increased to **1 in 64 children (1.6%)**. Since 2008, the prevalence in Arizona has remained fairly steady.



### Of children identified with ASD...

**...over 90%**  
had developmental concerns by 3 years of age.



**...but only 34%**  
received a comprehensive developmental evaluation by 3 years of age.

# Arizona

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What are the key take-away messages?

- Fewer than half of the children identified with ASD received a comprehensive developmental evaluation by 3 years of age despite concerns about developmental delays. This lag between first concern and first developmental evaluation leads to delays in diagnosis and connection to the services and support the children need.
- Although ASD can be diagnosed as early as 2 years of age, in Arizona, the median age of diagnosis by a community provider is 4 years and 8 months of age.
- Differences between the percentage of boys and girls identified with ASD continue. It may be that boys are at greater risk for ASD, and/or it may be that girls are under-identified due to other factors.
- Hispanic children are less likely to be identified with ASD compared to non-Hispanic children in Arizona. This may reflect cultural differences, socioeconomic differences, and/or differences in access to diagnostic and therapeutic services.
- More children with average intelligence levels are being identified with ASD. This may reflect increased awareness of the signs of autism, differentiated from other developmental disabilities.

### How can this information be useful?

ADDSP's latest findings can be used to

- Promote early identification of ASD,
- Plan for ASD services and training,
- Guide future ASD research, and
- Inform policies promoting improved outcomes in health care and education for individuals with ASD.

Stakeholders in Arizona might consider different ways to

- Lower the age of diagnosis by community providers.
- Increase awareness of ASD among Hispanic and minority families.
- Identify cultural, educational, and economic barriers to decreasing the age of evaluation and diagnosis in Hispanic, rural, and other underserved children.

### How and where was this information collected?

This information is based on the analysis of data collected from the health and special education records of children who were 8 years old and living in part of Maricopa County in metropolitan Phoenix in 2014.

- Children in tracking area: 24,952 8-year-olds
  - 49.3 percent white
  - 5.4 percent black
  - 39.2 percent Hispanic
  - 3.9 percent Asian or Pacific Islander
  - 2.2 percent American Indian or Alaska Native

### What has been the effect of the change in the diagnostic criteria used to identify children with ASD?

Surveillance year 2014 was the first year we were able to compare prevalence estimates based on the change in the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) criteria for ASD. In Arizona, 80 percent of children identified with ASD met both DSM-IV-TR and DSM-5 surveillance criteria. Among all ADDM sites, 86 percent of children identified with ASD met both sets of criteria.

### What else does ADDSP do besides tracking ASD among 8-year-olds?

ADDSP collaborates with the Arizona Department of Health Services and investigators from the University of Arizona to track the percentage and characteristics of 4-year-olds and 8-year-olds with ASD and/or intellectual disability. In addition, ADDSP is involved in extensive ASD and developmental disabilities-related outreach and training of students, parents, educators, and clinicians through the Arizona Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities. Training and outreach also extends to minority communities and rural service providers throughout Arizona.

## Get Resources and Connect Families to Services and Support in Arizona

### Arizona Autism Coalition

[www.azautism.org](http://www.azautism.org)

### Arizona Early Intervention Program

602-542-4446

<https://des.az.gov/services/disabilities/developmental-infant>

### AZ Find

800-352-4558

[www.azed.gov/special-education/az-find/](http://www.azed.gov/special-education/az-find/)

### AZA United

602-773-5773

[www.azaunited.org/](http://www.azaunited.org/)

### CDC's Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Kyle Lininger, Arizona's Act Early Ambassador  
[Kyle@AS-AZ.org](mailto:Kyle@AS-AZ.org)

### Raising Special Kids

602-242-4366

[www.raisingpecialkids.org/](http://www.raisingpecialkids.org/)

### Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center (SARRC)

602-340-8717

[www.autismcenter.org/](http://www.autismcenter.org/)

### Connect with ADDSP

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***“These statistics can create change. Our community can understand that there is a need to serve those affected when you put a number on it. Thank you, ADDSP, for making the world aware that we all are affected by autism in some capacity. And, we all need to make the world a better place for those who are affected.”***

- Brie Seward, Associate Director,  
The Autism Society of Southern Arizona