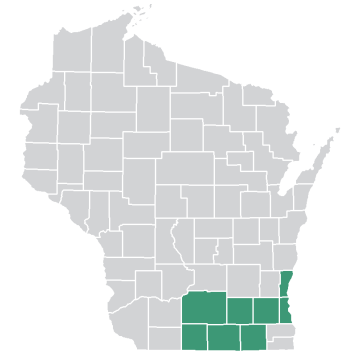


A Snapshot of Autism Spectrum Disorder in Wisconsin

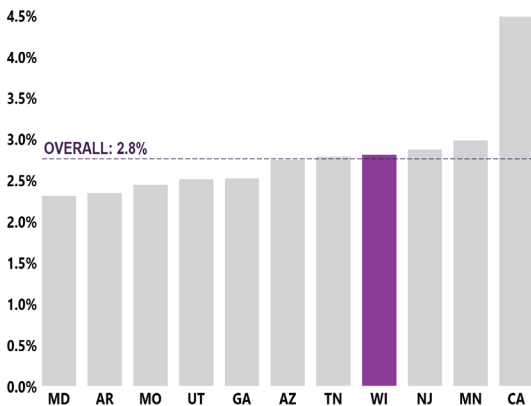
Findings from the Wisconsin Surveillance of Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities System (WISADDS) help understanding about the number of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), the characteristics of those children, and the age at which they are evaluated and diagnosed.



SITE TRACKING AREA

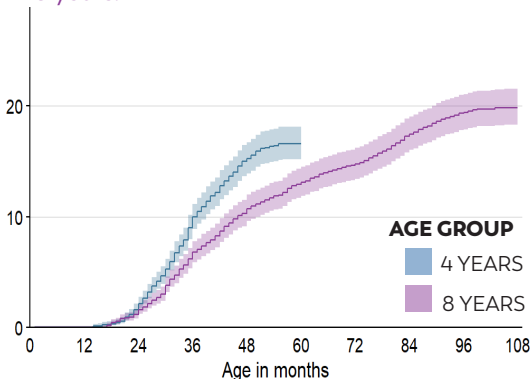
1 in 36

Or **2.8%** of 8-year-old children were identified with ASD in WISADDS in 2020.

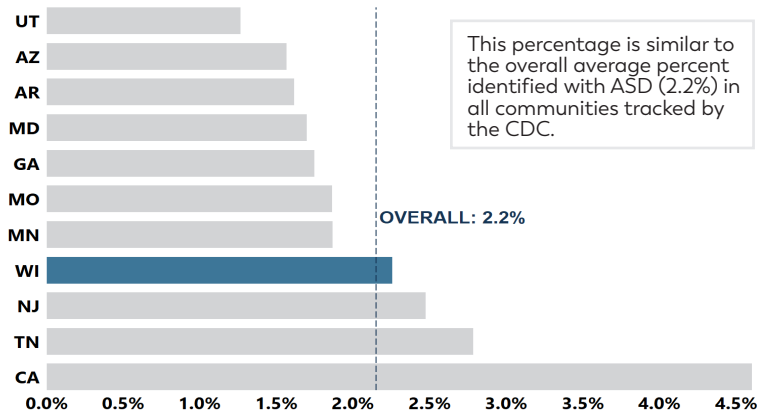


This percentage is higher than it was in 2018 (1.9%) and similar to the overall average percent identified with ASD (2.8%) in all communities where CDC tracked ASD among 8-year-olds in 2020.

Children who were **age 4** were 1.4 times as likely to receive an ASD diagnosis or ASD special education classification by 48 months of age compared to **children aged 8 years**.

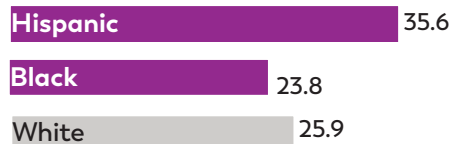


About 1 in 44 or 2.3% of 4-year-old children were identified with ASD in WISADDS in 2020.

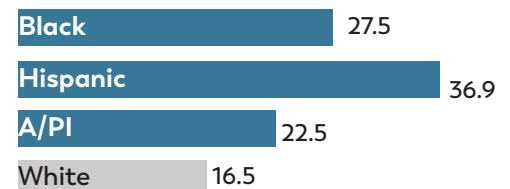


This percentage is similar to the overall average percent identified with ASD (2.2%) in all communities tracked by the CDC.

Among **8-year-old children**, **Hispanic Children** were 1.4 times as likely to be identified with ASD as White children. Hispanic 8-year-old children were also 1.4 times as likely to be identified with ASD as Black children.



Among **4-year-olds**, Black, Hispanic, and Asian Pacific Islander (A/PI) children were respectively 1.7 times, 2.2 times, and 1.4 times as likely to be identified with ASD as White children.



Boys were 3 times

More likely to be identified with ASD than girls among both **4-year-old** and **8-year-old children**.



Among **8-year-old children with ASD**, more than half (**58%**) received a comprehensive developmental evaluation by age 3 years.



What are the key take-away messages in WISADDS data?

- The percentage of 8-year-old children identified with ASD increased in southeastern Wisconsin, from 1.9% in 2018 to 2.8% in 2020.
- Among both 4-year-old and 8-year-old children, boys were more likely to be identified with ASD than girls.
- 57.5% of 8-year-old children identified with ASD received a comprehensive developmental evaluation by age 36 months, an increase from 2018.
- The prevalence of ASD has varied across racial and ethnic groups since 2002 in WISADDS. In 2020, the prevalence among 4-year-old Hispanic children was higher than any other group. The overall prevalence has increased more for Black, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islanders than for White children.

How can this information be useful?

WISADDS' latest findings can be used to

- Promote early identification of ASD.
- Plan for ASD services and training.
- Guide future ASD research, such as research to better understand prevalence differences across all racial and ethnic groups.
- Inform policies promoting access to health care and education for individuals with ASD and improved outcomes over the life course.

Partners in Wisconsin might consider different ways to

- Increase awareness of developmental monitoring and empower parents to act when there is a concern about their child's development.
- Lower the age of first evaluation by community providers.
- Increase awareness of ASD and identify and address barriers to early evaluations and services.

How and where was this information collected?

WISADDS uses a record review method. Specifically, this information is based on the analysis of data collected from the health and special education records of 4-year-old and 8-year-old children living in one of eight counties in southeastern Wisconsin in 2020.

Tracking area: Dane, Green, Jefferson, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Rock, Walworth, and Waukesha counties

8-year-old children in tracking area: 28,789 **4-year-old children in tracking area: 28,852**

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| • 55% White | • 54% White |
| • 17% Black | • 18% Black |
| • 17% Hispanic | • 17% Hispanic |
| • 6% Asian or Pacific Islander | • 6% Asian or Pacific Islander |
| • .3% American Indian or Alaska Native | • 0% American Indian or Alaska Native |
| • 5% Multiracial | • 5% Multiracial |

What else does WISADDS do besides tracking ASD among 4- and 8-year-olds?

WISADDS collaborates with partners in Wisconsin to raise awareness about the number and characteristics of children with ASD. This information is useful for planning to meet the growing demand for autism services in our community. In addition to 8-year-olds and 4-year-olds, WISADDS conducts follow-up of outcomes at age 16. WISADDS is also engaged in training and dissemination of information related to developmental disabilities for professionals.

"This report underscores the importance of autism in our community. For the past 50 years, Waisman Center researchers, clinicians, educators and community partners have worked to advance our understanding of autism and other developmental disabilities and to improve outcomes over the life course for individuals and families in Wisconsin. During this time, we have seen steady increases in the number of children on the autism spectrum and the need for services. We are grateful to be a part of the ADDM Network and to have this information on the prevalence of autism in our population and across the nation." -

QIANG CHANG, PhD

Professor of Medical Genetics and Neurology, Director, Waisman Center, University Of Wisconsin-Madison

Resources

GET RESOURCES TO CONNECT FAMILIES TO SERVICES AND SUPPORT IN WISCONSIN

AUTISM SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN

Information and support for families/providers
1-888-4-AUTISM
www.asw4autism.org

BIRTH TO THREE PROGRAM, WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

Services for children under the age of 3 years with developmental delays or disabilities
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/birthto3/index.htm

FINDING YOUR WAY

Guide for Wisconsin families who have children and youth with special needs and disabilities
<https://ucedd.waisman.wisc.edu/fyw/>

CDC'S LEARN THE SIGNS. ACT EARLY.

Resources for families and professionals on child development and what to do if there is a concern
Kris Barnekow
Wisconsin's Act Early Ambassador
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/ambassadors-list.html>

WELL BADGER RESOURCE CENTER

Information and referral hotline for families/providers working with children and youth with special needs:
MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH AND FIRST STEP RESOURCE LINE
at 800-642-7837
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/mch/well-badger.htm>

CONNECT WITH WISADDS

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