

## **CDC Reports Latest Trends in the Prevalence of Developmental Disabilities**

According to a new study released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of children with developmental disabilities has increased over the decade from 1997 – 2008. An article published in the journal *Pediatrics* concludes that developmental disabilities are common and were reported in approximately 1 in 6 children in the United States in 2006 – 2008. The number of children with select developmental disabilities such as autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and other developmental delays has increased and require more health care and education services.

In this study, boys had a higher prevalence overall and for a number of select disabilities compared with girls. Hispanic children had the lowest prevalence for a number of disabilities compared with non-Hispanic white and black children. Low income and public health insurance were associated with a higher prevalence of many disabilities. Prevalence of any developmental disability increased from 12.84% to 15.04% over 12 years. Autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and other developmental delays increased, whereas hearing loss showed a significant decline. These trends were found in all of the sociodemographic subgroups, except for autism in non-Hispanic black children.

Of the individual disorders, ADHD and autism showed significant and successive increases over time. Other developmental delays also showed significant increases over the time period. ADHD, because of its considerably higher prevalence, was chiefly responsible for the upward trend in the overall prevalence of developmental disabilities, with a 33% increase in prevalence from 1997 – 1999 to 2006 – 2008. Autism, however,

showed by far, the largest relative increase, with nearly a fourfold change from a prevalence of 0.19% in 1997 – 1998 to 0.73% in 2006 – 2008. Moderate to profound hearing loss was the only disorder to decline in prevalence, showing a 31% decrease from 1997 – 1999 to 2006 – 2008. For more information about this article, please see “Trends in the Prevalence of Developmental Disabilities in U.S. Children, 1997 – 2008” in the journal *Pediatrics*, Volume 127, Number 6, June 2011.

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