



Autism Rate by Race and Ethnicity in New Jersey

About the New Jersey Autism Registry

The New Jersey Autism Registry began in 2009 to help address the needs of residents diagnosed with autism. The Registry is one of New Jersey's efforts to understand the impact of autism across the state. All healthcare providers who diagnose or follow a child with autism are required to register them with the New Jersey Autism Registry. To date, more than 50,000 children have been registered.

The New Jersey Autism Registry focuses on three main missions:

1 CONNECT



Directly **connect** families of children with autism to Special Child Health Case Management services in their county.

2 INFORM



Provide **information** that can help identify where high-quality services are in most demand.

3 ANALYZE



Analyze emerging patterns and risk factors associated with autism.

Prevalence Differences by Race and Ethnicity

It is important to know how autism affects people in every county. To find out if there are significant differences across race and ethnicity by county, we reviewed information for children born each year between 2009 and 2019. Autism prevalence looks at the percent of children from each birth year who are diagnosed. Using percentages allows for accurate comparison between groups of different sizes.

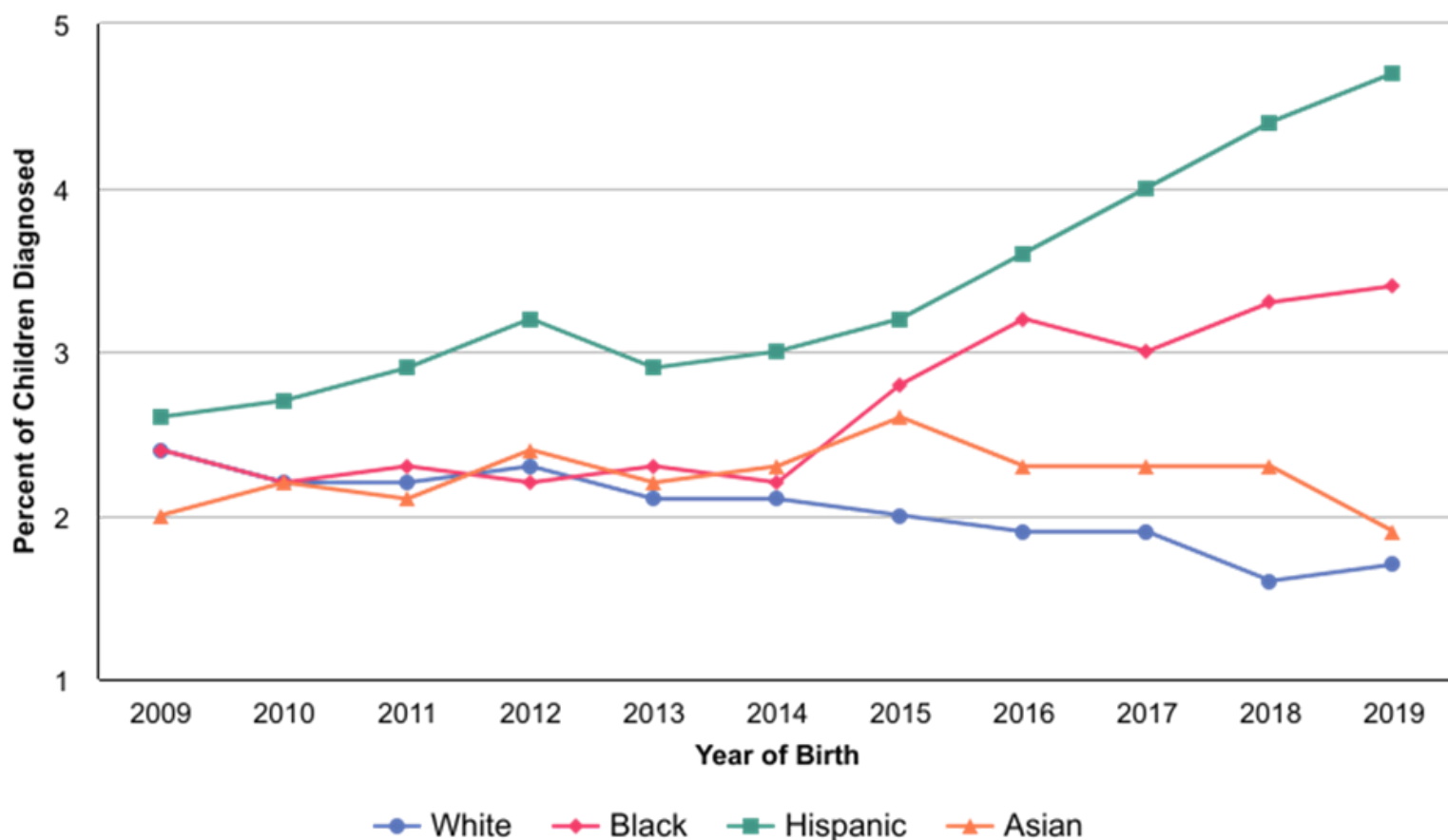


Changes in New Jersey's Autism Rate by Race and Ethnicity by Birth Year

30,179 New Jersey children born between 2009 and 2019 were registered by health care providers.

The chart below shows autism prevalence by race and ethnicity among children born each year from 2009 to 2019. Diagnosis among children born between 2009 and 2015 was steady among all groups. Rates for Black and Hispanic children born after 2015 increased more significantly than the other groups.

The trends in New Jersey diagnoses support findings in recent large studies of race and ethnicity. The Autism Registry also finds a rise among Hispanic children in the more recent birth years. Researchers have not found a single answer as to why, but it does not appear that any one group has any more or less difficulty in accessing diagnostic services.





Race/Ethnicity Prevalence by County Compared to Statewide

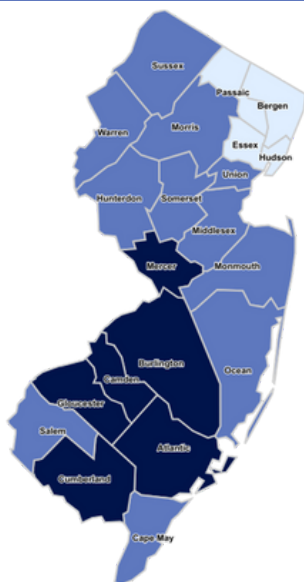
The maps below show prevalence by each of New Jersey's 21 counties by race and ethnicity. The darker shaded areas have the highest prevalence, the lighter shades have the lowest, and the middle shade is the same as the state average for that group. Counties with striped shading means that the population size could not be analyzed for significance.

Prevalence Among White Children by County

Average statewide prevalence:

2.0%

Six counties have higher-than-average prevalence, while four had lower-than-average prevalence.

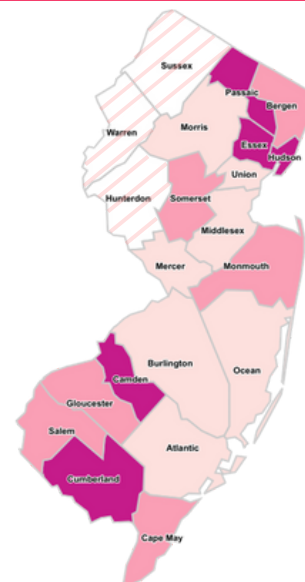


Prevalence Among Black Children by County

Average statewide prevalence:

2.6%

Three northern counties and two southern counties have higher-than-average autism rates.

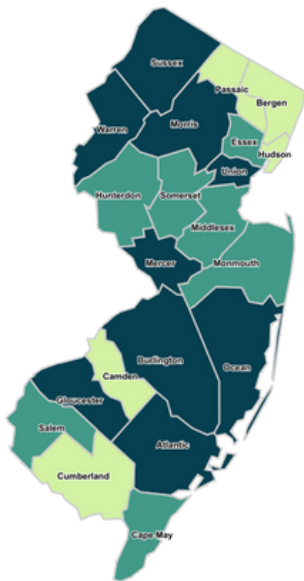


Prevalence Among Hispanic Children by County

Average statewide prevalence:

3.4%

Many counties have a higher-than-average prevalence.

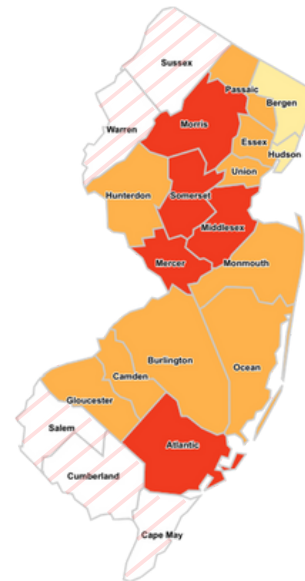


Prevalence Among Asian Children by County

Average statewide prevalence:

2.2%

One third of the counties have higher-than-expected rates.



Why is it Important to Understand Prevalence Patterns?



Increase Understanding of Differences and Similarities

By looking beyond statewide autism prevalence, we can better understand the similarities and differences among different groups. For example, we can look for unique patterns among children born in certain birth years, living in certain areas of the state, and identify any emerging disparities between racial and ethnic groups.

Determine Where Services are Needed

Knowing county autism rates can help providers offer specialized services and interventions in areas with high needs, so that children with autism can receive services in the communities where they live.



Provide High-Quality, Culturally Competent Services

Information helps health care and other providers ensure that services match the needs of their local communities. For example, the Department of Health's Special Child Health Services county-based case management units help families find services and supports.

Track Changes in Trends

We will continue to review prevalence data to see if there are any changes over time, location or across groups (such as whether rates are increasing or decreasing) and to identify possible barriers to diagnosis.



More from the New Jersey Autism Registry

County Profiles

The recently released *County Profiles* provide a snapshot of autism data for each county in New Jersey. Using Autism Registry data, these profiles highlight local autism prevalence, diagnosis trends, and available resources. Families can explore support in their area, while agencies can use the data to plan essential services.

Autism Prevalence Trends in Hispanic Children

The *New Jersey Autism Registry Shows Increasing Prevalence Among Hispanic Children* report and presentation highlight a growing trend seen not only in New Jersey but across the country. Data from the Registry show a rising number of Hispanic children being diagnosed with autism, emphasizing the need for early identification and improved access to services.

Website

To view the reports or for more information on the New Jersey Autism Registry, including our brochure, visit nj.gov/health/fhs/autism/public/registry/

Additional Autism Studies

Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network

The ADDM Network is a program funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to collect data and better understand the number and characteristics of children with autism and other developmental disabilities. The network includes 17 states including New Jersey and an additional site in Georgia. Visit cdc.gov/autism/addm-network

Mental Health Resource Network Study

“Autism Diagnosis Among US Children and Adults, 2011-2022”, a 2024 research report published in the journal JAMA Network Open, describes findings from a national study that examined annual diagnosis rates in health records of patients in US health systems from 2011 to 2022. It is available to download at: jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2825472