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on

Autism & Related Disorders



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Autism Statistics & Quick Facts

Quick Overview of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

- This is a brain-based problem characterized by problems in : language/communication; unusual movements/behaviors; poor/absent social interactions.
- There is no known cause for autism, but it is generally accepted that it is caused by abnormalities in the brain with a link to genetics.
- Autism is the fastest growing developmental disorder in the country with a 10 to 17 percent annual growth.
- In 2005, children with autism made up 3 percent of the more than 6 million children in the United States who received services through special education programs.
- An average family will spend about \$40,000 to \$70,000 a year in resources and services for a child with autism.
- The divorce rate among couples with children with autism is estimated to be as high as 80 percent.
- Forty to 60 percent of people with autism do not exhibit some form of mental retardation.
- Boys are 4 times more likely than girls to have autism
- There is no medical detection, treatment, or cure for autism
- Recent research shows that a reliable diagnosis of ASD can be made by 18 months of age. However, the diagnosis is typically not made until 3-4 years of age or later.

National Statistics:

- Autism is now the **fastest growing** disability in the State and in the nation.
- There are now **over 1.8 million** cases of autism in the U.S.
- There is one new case of autism diagnosed **every 20 minutes**.
- There are 24,000 new cases diagnosed in the U.S. per year
- estimates indicate that over 4 million Americans will develop autism in the next decade
- It costs about **\$3.2 million** for the lifetime care of an autistic person.
- Autism care costs **\$35 billion** per year to the U.S.
- The total national economic impact of autism has been estimated as more than **\$90 billion** annually and expected to more than double in the next decade.
- Autism receives less than 5% of the research funding of many less prevalent childhood diseases

California Statistics:

- California's autism caseload has increased by **634%** from 1987 to the end of 2002 while there has been only a slight increase in incidence of the other disabilities (mental retardation, cerebral palsy, and epilepsy.)
- The number of individuals with autism served by the Dept. of Developmental Services (DDS) more than **doubled** in only 4 years (1998-2002) and over **3,000 new cases** continue to be added annually.
- In December of 1998, the total number of persons with autism in California's Developmental Services System was 10,360. By December of 2002, the number of persons with autism in California had reached 20,377. Currently, there are over 53,000 regional center consumers who are diagnosed with ASD
- Over **two-thirds of all new cases** entering DDS are autistic individuals.
- Approximately 77% of all autistic individuals are under the age of 18 and 84% are under 22 years of age.

K-12 Education Statistics:

- There has been over a **one thousand percent increase** in the number of students with autism enrolled in K-12 education during the past 12 years. During this time the incidences of other developmental disabilities have remained relatively constant.
- Nearly every part of California has seen a **doubling** of the incidence of students with autism in K-12 over the past 4 years alone.
- Autism is now the most common cause of fair hearings and litigation:
 - In 2003-04 the Las Virgenes USD spent almost **\$900,000 in legal** fees, much of which was related to a single autism-related case that was litigated in Superior Court.
 - In Long Beach USD, **19 out of 45** special education due process cases involved students with autism costing the district \$186,130 in legal fees only related to due process actions. For the 2004-05 school year in Long Beach, **9 of 13** due process cases involved students with autism, and those cases together totaled more than \$205,000 in legal fees.
 - The Ojai Unified School District in Ventura County, a small district with 40 students with autism in a total student population of 3,800 students, spent **\$400,000** in 2004-05 on autism-related legal costs that did not factor in administrative time.

Statistics for Adults with ASD

- 61% of adults with autism rely on their families for financial support
- 40% live at home with their parents.
- 82% say that with more support they would be less isolated.
- 67% have experienced anxiety and 55% depression because of a lack of support.
- 60% of parents say a lack of timely support has resulted in their son or daughter having higher support needs in the long term.
- Among adult regional center consumers over age 18 (111,381), over 84% of these individuals are unemployed.
- the annual income of the employed regional center consumers is often a pittance and averaged only **\$4,824 per year.**
- Recent reports indicate that California ranks 34th in the employment of individuals with disabilities & special needs.