



North Carolina Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities Epidemiology

The Children's Health Act of 2000 directed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to establish regional centers for autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) and other developmental disabilities (DDs). CDC is now funding **Centers for Autism and Developmental Disabilities Research and Epidemiology (CADDREs)** in California, Colorado, Maryland, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. In Georgia, CDC's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities at CDC leads the sixth CADDRE program. The three goals of these centers are to conduct center-initiated special studies, to design and conduct a multisite study of causes and risk factors for ASDs, and to disseminate findings to increase public health awareness. For information about CADDRE, please visit the CDC website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/caddre>.



In North Carolina, CADDRE is based at the School of Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The center studies ASDs in the following counties of North Carolina: Alamance, Chatham, Davidson, Durham, Forsyth, Guilford, Johnston, Orange, Randolph and Wake.

Study to Explore Early Development (SEED)

In this study, the center will work with other CADDRE programs to find causes of ASDs or factors that make it more likely that a child will have an ASD. Families who take part in SEED will answer survey questions and provide biological samples, children will be given developmental tests and physical examinations, and staff will look at medical records. Approximately 2700 children 2 through 5 years of age and their parents are expected to participate in this multisite study. Children with an ASD will be compared with a random sample of children from the general population, and a sample of children with other neurodevelopmental problems.

Special Studies

In addition to the multisite collaborations, the North Carolina center is involved in several local complimentary studies. These will evaluate:

- The cost and scope of services used by families who have a child with autism.
- The sociodemographic and geographic characteristics that might affect receipt of an ASD diagnosis or use of services.
- The personality traits among the family members of children with an ASD.

Sharing Information

The North Carolina center plans to train nurses, physicians, educators, and other providers of health and educational services to screen children for signs of DDs and ASDs. Information will be shared through mailings to parents and support groups, the media, scientific publications, and presentations at professional conferences.

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