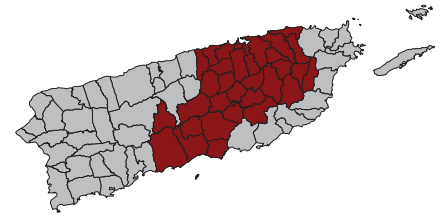


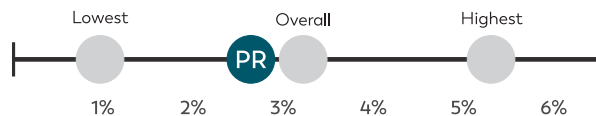
# A Snapshot of Autism Spectrum Disorder in Puerto Rico

Findings from the Puerto Rico Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network (PR-ADDMM) help us to understand more about the number of children with autism, the characteristics of those children, and the age at which they are first evaluated and diagnosed.



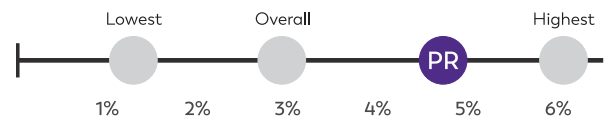
**■ SITE TRACKING AREA**

About **1 in 38** or **2.6%** of **8-year-old** children were identified with autism by PR-ADDMM in 2022.



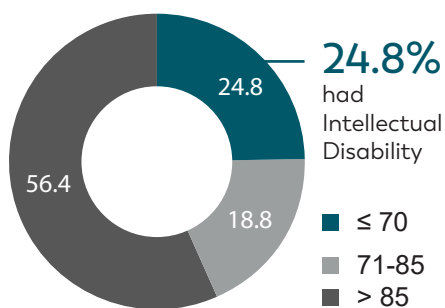
The percentage, in teal, is lower than the overall percentage identified with autism, in gray, (3.2%) in all communities where CDC tracked autism among 8-year-olds in 2022.

About **1 in 21** or **4.7%** of **4-year-old** children were identified with autism by PR-ADDMM in 2022.



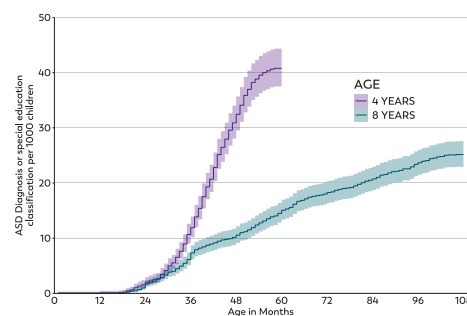
The percentage, in purple, is higher than the overall percentage identified with autism, in gray, (2.9%) in all communities where CDC tracked autism among 4-year-olds in 2022.

Intelligence quotient (IQ) data were available for **68.1%** of **8-year-old** children identified with autism in PR-ADDMM. Of these children, **24.8% had intellectual disability**.

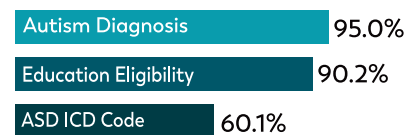


Intellectual disability is defined as an IQ score equal to or less than 70.

**Children born in 2018** were **3 times as likely** to receive an autism diagnosis or autism special education classification by 48 months of age (3.3%) compared with **children born in 2014** (1.1%).



Overall, **95.0%** of **8-year-olds** who met the ADDMM case definition had an autism diagnostic statement from a health or education record; **90.2%** had autism special education eligibility; and **60.1%** had an autism International Classification of Disease (ICD) code.



Among **8-year-olds**, boys were **3.2 times as likely** as girls to be identified with autism.



Among **4-year-olds**, boys were **3.4 times as likely** as girls to be identified with autism.



## What we know

- Higher autism prevalence and more identifications and evaluations in the 4-year cohort indicates significant improvement in early identification of autism. The percentage of 4-year-old children identified with autism in PR-ADDM is higher than the overall ADDM network and the other network sites except for California.
- The prevalence of co-occurring intellectual disability in 8-year-old children in PR-ADDM who had data on cognitive ability was lower than the overall ADDM network percentage and the other network sites. Over half of the 8-year-old children were classified in the average or higher range. Only a quarter were classified as having intellectual disability.
- The percentage of boys identified with autism is higher than the percentage of girls in PR-ADDM. It is lower than the overall ADDM network percentage for 8-year-olds but higher for the 4-year-old children.
- Most 8-year-old children had an autism diagnostic statement from a health or education record.

## Why are these findings important?

Advancement in early identification and diagnosis of autism plays a crucial role in providing timely intervention and support, significantly improving the long-term outcomes for affected children and their families.

These data can be used to:

- Raise awareness of current autism prevalence.
- Promote autism early identification and diagnosis.
- Identify differences and patterns among children who are diagnosed with autism.
- Inform public policy and resource allocation to support children with autism and their families.

## Why is partnership with PR-ADDM important?

Partnership fosters a network of information-sharing and cooperation, integrating diverse datasets while ensuring compliance with privacy laws, to fulfill the potential of data to improve the lives of individuals with autism and their families.

## Where was the information collected?

PR-ADDM uses a record review method. Specifically, this information is based on the analysis of data collected from the health and special education records of children who were 4 or 8 years old and living in 32 municipalities in north, east, south, and central regions of Puerto Rico in 2022.

**8-year-old children in tracking area: 17,457**

- 100% Hispanic

**4-year-old children in tracking area: 12,849**

- 100% Hispanic

*The US Census Population Estimates Program does not include race and Hispanic origin detail for Puerto Rico at the municipality level. This census methodology assumes that all Puerto Rico residents are Hispanic.*

## Resources



**GRECIA HUERTA-MONTAÑEZ,  
MD, FAAP**

**Puerto Rico American Academy of  
Pediatrics Chapter (PR-AAP)**

*"These data are essential to define the autism burden [in Puerto Rico] and determine the needs of our population to better help children reach their optimal development and fulfill their potential. This effort sets the stage for wide-ranging action to benefit hundreds of children in Puerto Rico and their families. In addition ... it will help advance existing research directed to improving developmental outcomes among children with autism and fostering new investigations."*