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Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Council

March 18, 2026



ASDAC Background

- Comprised of 25 total appointed members
 - Membership represents providers, individuals with autism, higher education faculty, family members, physicians and state agency representatives.
- Council Responsibility
 - Advise the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management concerning policies and programs for persons with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and make recommendations to improve coordination and address gaps in autism services.

Legislative Subcommittee

Legislative Committee Objectives



IDENTIFY ASDAC LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES TO ADDRESS SYSTEM GAPS AND ENHANCE SUPPORT SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH ASD AND THEIR FAMILIES.



REVIEW PROPOSED LEGISLATION AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE FULL COMMITTEE TO SUPPORT OR OPPOSE.



SUBMIT TESTIMONY AND ENGAGE WITH LEGISLATORS TO INFORM ON POLICIES THAT IMPACT PEOPLE WITH ASD AND THEIR FAMILIES.

Estimating the prevalence of ASD

There are several ways to estimate the number of children with ASD. This estimate is referred to as prevalence, a scientific term that describes the number of people with a disease or condition among a defined group (or 'population'). Prevalence is typically shown as a percent (e.g., 0.1%) or a proportion (e.g., 1 in 1,000).

Fact

1 in 31

About 1 in 31 children were identified with autism spectrum disorder among a 2022 sample of 8-year-olds from 16 US communities in CDC's ADDM Network. [\[1\]](#)



Prevalence Estimates Over Time

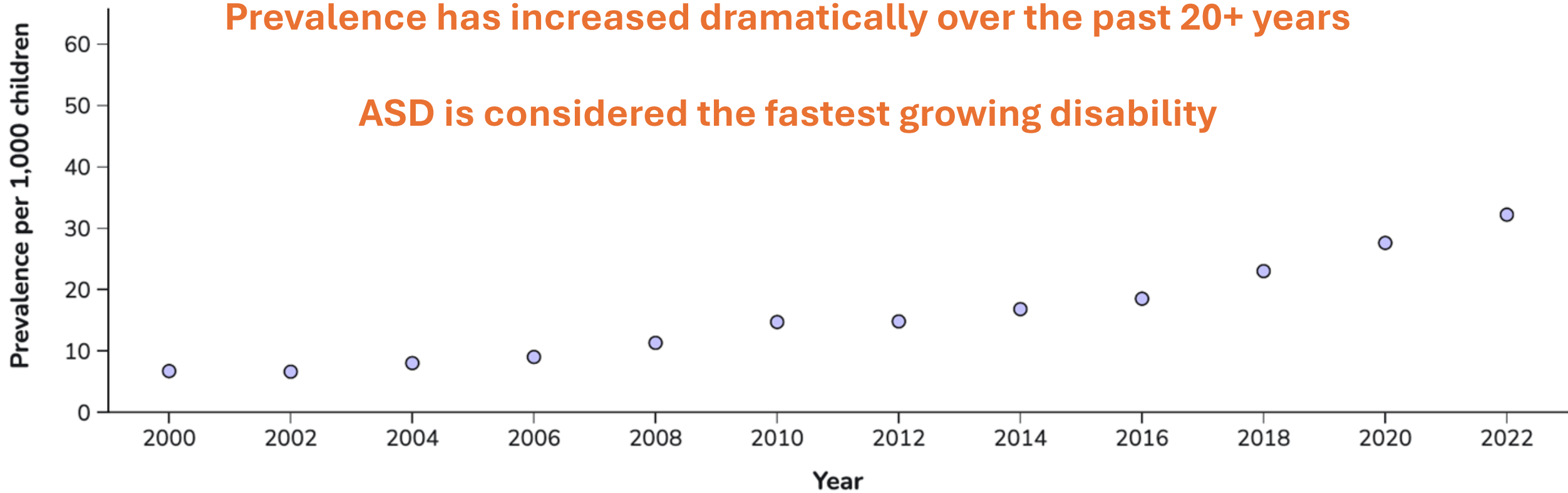
Using data set:

ADDM Network*



Show prevalence for:

Total



General Findings

- ASD is over three times more likely in males; however, females tend to be more severely impacted
- ASD is reported to occur in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups
- 1 in 3 individuals with ASD will also have an intellectual disability



State Education Data

Primary Disability, Trend State of Connecticut, Autism

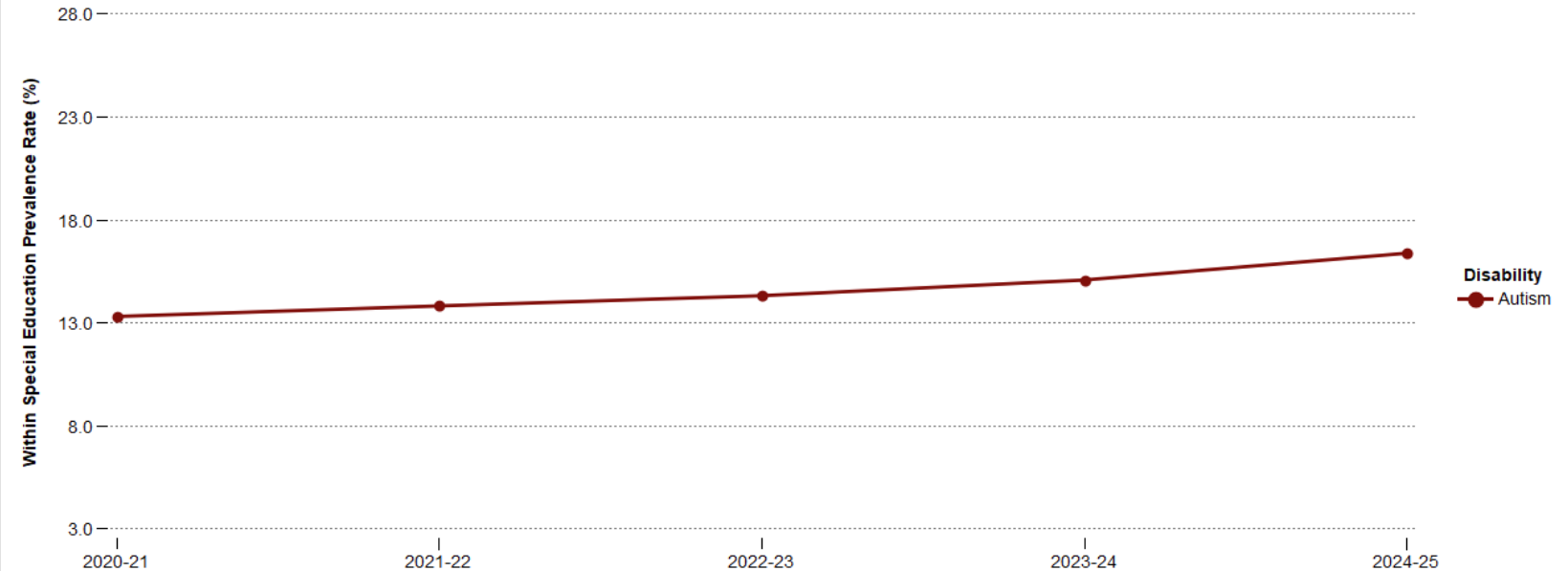
[Export .csv file](#)

Notes:

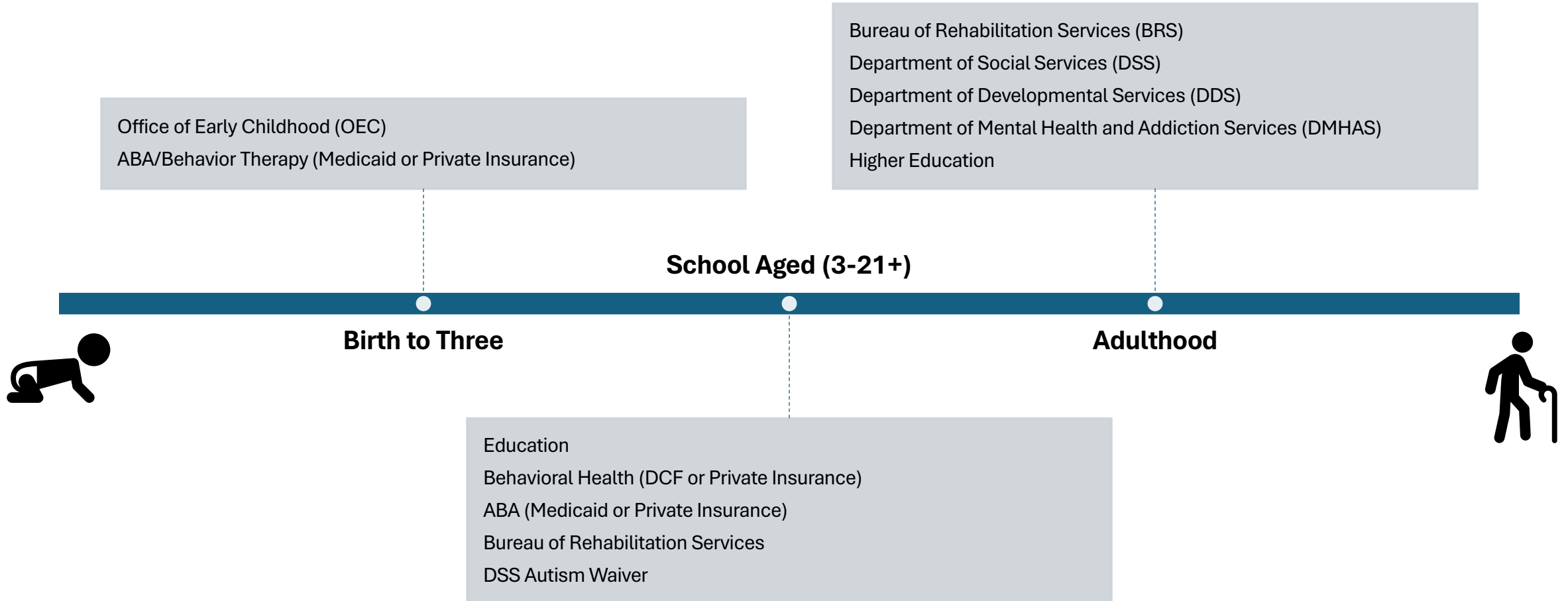
- Data included in this report represent students in Kindergarten through Grade 12 only.
- Overall Prevalence Rate is calculated by dividing the number of students in a disability category by the total number of students (both students with and without disabilities) in the district or state.
- Other Disabilities includes students with primary disabilities of Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, Orthopedic Impairment, Deaf/Blindness, Multiple Disabilities, Traumatic Brain Injury and Developmental Delay.

District	2020-21			2021-22			2022-23			2023-24			2024-25		
	Count	Overall Prevalence Rate (%)	Within Special Education Prevalence Rate (%)	Count	Overall Prevalence Rate (%)	Within Special Education Prevalence Rate (%)	Count	Overall Prevalence Rate (%)	Within Special Education Prevalence Rate (%)	Count	Overall Prevalence Rate (%)	Within Special Education Prevalence Rate (%)	Count	Overall Prevalence Rate (%)	Within Special Education Prevalence Rate (%)
State of Connecticut	10,528	2.1	13.3	11,195	2.3	13.8	11,841	2.4	14.3	12,897	2.6	15.1	14,248	2.9	16.4

Within Special Education Prevalence State of Connecticut Trend



Lifespan System Supports for ASD



Identified Gap #1

- Adults with autism lack access to "Behavior Therapy" treatment due to age limits in statute for private insurance and no existing Medicaid coverage outside of waivers.
- **Legislative Priority**
 - Eliminate age limits for Behavior Therapy coverage in the insurance statute
 - Expand Behavior Therapy in Medicaid to cover individuals beyond age twenty-one

Identified Gap #2

- Increase provider rates on all services in the DSS Autism Waiver and work to eliminate the waitlist for services.
- Rising costs and stagnant reimbursement rates—particularly for the most utilized services, many unchanged since 2021—are driving provider loss in the ASD Waiver

Service	Agency Hourly Rate	Effective Date
Job Coaching	\$48.96	07/21/2021
Life Skills	\$48.96	07/01/2021
Community Mentor	\$35.88	01/01/2026
Behavioral Support	\$127.96	07/01/2021

Legislative Priority

- Work to increase rates for ASD waiver services so the Department can attract new providers and workers
- Create a system to adjust rates fairly and more frequently moving forward
 - People who are approved for services are still struggling to find staff, in both self-directed and agency-based services.
 - We have 3,000 people on the waitlist for services,
 - There is a cliff in supports available as individuals are aging out of high school and children's services.

Identified Gap #3

- Increase professionals in the workforce who have clinical expertise in autism spectrum disorder.
- The only current services adults with autism have access to is traditional mental health supports and there is a lack of training for professionals on how to adapt treatment modalities for those on the spectrum.
- **Legislative Priority**
 - Require Autism Specific Training for Adult Service Providers
 - Develop grants for scalable clinical models designed specifically for adults with ASD

Housing Committee

Housing Committee Objectives



01

Examine the range of affordable and supportive housing models for adults with autism spectrum disorder that currently exist in the system.

02

Influence the expansion of housing opportunities that meet the needs of adults on the autism spectrum.

03

Create partnerships in housing communities and with service providers across CT to expand access to housing options that provide independence and dignity of risk.

Problem Statements

- No state residential services exist for adults within the ASD waiver
- Adults with ASD who are waiting for services have aging caregivers
- Lack of Rental Assistance Programs (RAPs) for supportive housing services for adults with autism
- Lack of data on housing needs specific to ASD population



Current Outcomes

- What happens to people when we fail to meet their needs and create meaningful opportunities?
 - Greater draw on system if we don't respond
 - Loss of skills after transition from entitlement children's services
 - Individual vs system
 - Justice involved
 - Emergency placements
 - Unsafe environments
 - Homelessness
 - Lack of job supports
 - Strain on natural supports
 - Limited opportunities for community participation and social relationships

Housing Committee Initiatives

- Conduct a survey to inform our work
 - Engage the ASD community and housing sector
- Autism Needs Assessment
 - Funded by Money Follows the Person Grant
 - Contract is in development between DSS and Vendor
- Autism Supportive Housing Pilot
 - Funded through Tobacco Trust Fund
 - RFP has been drafted and will be released this Spring

How can you help?



Assist us with making connections to housing committee members and community to increase advocacy opportunities.



Work in partnership to inform housing and ASD policy moving forward.



Reach out: How we can help you!

Questions & Comments



Remaining Agenda Items

- DSS Report Out
 - Agency Updates
 - New Business
 - Approve November 2025 Minutes
 - ASDAC Logo
 - Autism Awareness Day at the Capitol
 - Adjourn
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