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## Autism Rates Rising in California

Autism rates among young children in California are rising, based on parental reports in the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS). Autism is a complex developmental disorder that typically appears in the first three years of life and impairs cognitive skills and the ability to communicate with others. The disorder is known to cause tremendous emotional and financial stress on families with autistic children.

### Key Findings from CHIS

- Among children ages 3 to 11, rates of autism increased 2.5 times between 2001 and 2005, from 3.1 per 1,000 children in 2001 to 7.8 per 1,000 children in 2005.
- More than 36,000 (nearly 1%) children ages 3 to 11 in California were autistic in 2005, based on parental reports.
- The ratio of boys with autism to girls with autism was 3.4: 1 in 2005.
- Hispanic children were less likely to have autism than Non-Hispanic children, according to parent reports.
- Nearly 90% of parents who reported an autistic child also indicated their child had difficulty with emotions, concentration, behavior, or getting along with others.
- These findings are consistent with data reported from the Child Supplement of the 2003 National Health Interview Survey and the 2003 National Survey of Children's Health.<sup>1</sup>

### Exhibit

#### Autism Among Children in California, Based on Parental Reports, Ages 3 to 11, CHIS 2001 and CHIS 2005

	CHIS 2001		CHIS 2005	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Parental Report of Autism	14,755	0.3	36,444	0.8
All Children in California Ages 3 to 11	4,776,580	100	4,680,268	100
<b>Autism Rates</b>	<b>3.1 per 1,000</b>		<b>7.8 per 1,000</b>	

\* Autism Related Responses include: Autism, Asperger Syndrome, Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Child Disintegrative Disorder, and Autistic.

### Data Source

CHIS is a population-based random-digit-dial telephone survey that has been conducted every other year since 2001. Interviews are conducted with adults (ages 18 and older), adolescents (ages 12 to 17), and about children (ages 0 to 11 by the parent or guardian). CHIS 2001 surveyed 12,526 children, while CHIS 2005 surveyed 11,358 children. Child surveys allowed parents to specify autism as a condition that prevented their child from doing age-appropriate activities and/or schoolwork. For more information on CHIS, please visit [www.chis.ucla.edu](http://www.chis.ucla.edu).

<sup>1</sup> Dept of Health and Human Services. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. MMWR Parental Report of Diagnosed Autism in Children Aged 4–17 Years, United States, 2003–2004. May 4, 2006

