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# Researchers: Autism numbers appear to be on the rise

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By Tonya Terry, Anchor / Reporter [CONNECT](#)

WSFA/NBC - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates one in 59 children has autism. That's up from one in 68 children just two years ago.

The numbers are based on groups of 8-year-olds living in 11 states, so the report does not necessarily represent the country as a whole. Even so, it gives a good indication of national trends in autism diagnosis.

Meagan Adley is a clinical psychologist at Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital.

Adley said, "We certainly want to be able to start identifying these kids a little earlier because that's where we see the best movement with interventions and treatment. We want to start that as early as possible."

Some states, like New Jersey, had a higher prevalence. Researchers say it's because that state does a solid job of collecting autism data.

The report also shows better detection overall among African American children.

Experts still don't know all of the causes of autism spectrum disorder.

"It is a neuro-developmental disorder. We are seeing that we can start to see some genetic linkages to that. We're still learning more about that," said Adley.

Kids with autism tend to do better when they're diagnosed earlier and are able to get help at a younger age.

Boys were four times more likely than girls to be identified as having autism.

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