Autism Statistics & Quick Facts

Quick Overview of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

- This is a brain-based problem characterized by problems in: language/communication; unusual movements/behaviors; poor/absent social interactions.
- There is no known cause for autism, but it is generally accepted that it is caused by abnormalities in the brain with a link to genetics.
- Autism is the fastest growing developmental disorder in the country with a 10 to 17 percent annual growth.
- In 2005, children with autism made up 3 percent of the more than 6 million children in the United States who received services through special education programs.
- An average family will spend about $40,000 to $70,000 a year in resources and services for a child with autism.
- The divorce rate among couples with children with autism is estimated to be as high as 80 percent.
- Forty to 60 percent of people with autism do not exhibit some form of mental retardation.
- Boys are 4 times more likely than girls to have autism.
- There is no medical detection, treatment, or cure for autism.

National Statistics:

- Autism is now the fastest growing disability in the State and in the nation.
- There are now over 1.8 million cases of autism in the U.S.
- There is one new case of autism diagnosed every 20 minutes.
- There are over 24,000 new cases diagnosed in the U.S. per year.
- Over 4 million Americans will develop autism in the next decade.
- It costs about $3.2 million for the lifetime care of an autistic person.
- Autism care costs $35 billion per year to the U.S.
• The total national economic impact of autism has been estimated as more than $90 billion annually and expected to more than double in the next decade.
• Autism receives less than 5% of the research funding of many less prevalent childhood diseases

California Statistics:
• California’s autism caseload has increased by 634% from 1987 to the end of 2002 while there has been only a slight increases in incidence of the other disabilities (mental retardation, cerebral palsy, and epilepsy.)
• The number of individuals with autism served by the Dept. of Developmental Services (DDS) more than doubled in only 4 years (1998-2002) and over 3,000 new cases continue to be added annually.
• Over two-thirds of all new cases entering DDS are autistic individuals.
• Approximately 77% of all autistic individuals are under the age of 18.

K-12 Education Statistics:
• There has been over a one thousand percent increase in the number of students with autism enrolled in K-12 education during the past 12 years. During this time the incidences of other developmental disabilities have remained relatively constant.
• Nearly every part of California has seen a doubling of the incidence of students with autism in K-12 over the past 4 years alone.
• Autism is now the most common cause of fair hearings and litigation:
  o In 2003-04 the Las Virgenes USD spent almost $900,000 in legal fees.
  o In Long Beach USD, 19 out of 45 special education due process cases involved students with autism costing the district $186,130 in legal fees.
  o The Ojai Unified School District in Ventura County, a small district with 40 students with autism in a total student population of 3,800 students, spent $400,000 in 2004-05 on autism-related legal costs that did not factor in administrative time.

Statistics for Adults with ASD
• 61% of adults with autism rely on their families for financial support
• 40% live at home with their parents.
• 82% say that with more support they would be less isolated.
• 67% have experienced anxiety and 55% depression because of a lack of support.
• 60% of parents say a lack of timely support has resulted in their son or daughter having higher support needs in the long term.