

New CDC Report Shows Higher Autism Rates and Highlights Complicated Challenges of Accurate Diagnosis

Expert Available for Interview

WALNUT CREEK, CA, UNITED STATES, April 16, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) yesterday released the 2025 Community Report on Autism. It found that 1 in 31 children in the United States is expected to receive an autism diagnosis and that autism rates differ substantially among states.

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*Doreen Samelson, Ed.D.,
Catalight's chief clinical officer*

“Although today's CDC report provides an essential snapshot of autism rates, this is a complex issue,” said Doreen Samelson, Ed.D., MSCP, chief clinical officer at Catalight, one of the largest non-profit behavioral health networks in the United States, who leads the Catalight

Research Institute focused on improving access to care for people with autism. “The autism spectrum is very diverse, making an accurate diagnosis complex. Among the tens of thousands of children my organization has cared for over the past decade plus, many came to us with an incorrect diagnosis of autism, while others had not received an autism diagnosis despite showing clear signs.”

These persistent inconsistencies in autism diagnoses likely contributed to the major differences in autism rates reported by the CDC. For example, California had a rate of 1 in 19 children, compared to the rate of 1 in 101 children in Laredo, Texas.

“My experience tells me that California's rate of autism isn't so different than rates in other states,” said Dr. Samelson. “Clearly, there is still significant work to do to accurately diagnose autism throughout the United States.”

Media Availability

Dr. Samelson is an autism researcher, clinical psychologist and contributor to “Psychology Today.” She is available for interviews with media on:

- The challenges of diagnosing autism accurately
- Autism prevalence
- The importance of early diagnosis and intervention for improving long-term outcomes
- The barriers to access families of autistic children face when they seek diagnosis and treatment of autism

Dr. Samelson is also the parent of an adult with a developmental disability and is passionate about self-determinism, inclusion and helping people with developmental disabilities improve their quality of life.

To schedule an interview with Dr. Samelson, contact Keith Ferguson at keith.ferguson@catalight.org or (925) 532-9615 or Megan McDevitt at megan.mcdevitt@catalight.org or (925) 464-0811.

About Catalight

Catalight breaks down barriers and biases to create a more equitable world so people with developmental disabilities can choose their path. Catalight provides access to innovative, individualized care services, clinical research and advocacy — all powered by intelligent technology. Through the work of affiliate partners, Easterseals Hawaii and Easterseals Northern California, Catalight and its family of companies support people with developmental disabilities and their families across their care journey.

The Catalight family of companies is one of the largest behavioral health networks in the nation with more than 16,000 practitioners serving 24,000 clients and families every day. Backed by more than a decade of experience and a multidisciplinary team of clinicians, we are reimagining the way people with developmental disabilities and their families experience healthcare. Catalight's goal is to ensure that individuals and families receive timely access to evidence-based treatment, including naturalistic developmental and language-based services, applied behavior analysis, occupational therapy and speech therapy.

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