

# Colorado Center for Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities



The Children's Health Act of 2000 directed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to establish regional centers for autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) and other developmental disabilities (DDs). CDC is now funding **Centers for Autism and Developmental Disabilities Research and Epidemiology (CADDREs)** in California, Colorado, Maryland, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. In Georgia, CDC's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities at CDC leads the sixth CADDRE program. The three goals of these centers are to conduct center-initiated special studies, to design and conduct a multisite study of causes and risk factors for ASDs, and to disseminate findings to increase public health awareness. For information about CADDRE, please visit the CDC website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/caddre>.

In Colorado, CADDRE is conducted as a partnership between the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and JFK Partners, an affiliated program with the University of Colorado Denver. The Colorado CADDRE program studies ASDs in the seven-county metropolitan Denver area (Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties). To achieve its goals, the Colorado center conducts the following activities:



## ***Study to Explore Early Development (SEED)***

In this study, the center will work with other CADDRE programs to find causes of ASDs or factors that make it more likely that a child will have an ASD. Families who take part in SEED will answer survey questions and provide biological samples, children will be given developmental tests and physical examinations, and staff will look at medical records. Approximately 2700 children 2 through 5 years of age and their parents are expected to participate in this multisite study. Children with an ASD will be compared with a random sample of children from the general population, and a sample of children with other neurodevelopmental problems.

## ***Education and Outreach***

The Colorado center shares what is learned from our studies through mailings targeted to key audiences; parent advocacy group newsletters; local conferences; scientific publications; and our website.

## ***Special Studies***

The Colorado center is working on several special studies to investigate the relationships between ASDs and other health problems. The special studies focus on anxiety symptoms; sleep disorders; and gastrointestinal symptoms, specifically intestinal permeability, and stool consistency and frequency in children with ASDs. Colorado CADDRE is also piloting a study of the planned SEED physical examination with a clinical genetics examination to evaluate a method for describing a child's physical features. Finally, Colorado CADDRE has explored screening strategies that schools can use to help them more efficiently identify high-functioning children with ASDs.

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