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Trends in Parent-Reported Developmental Disabilities: 2019–2024

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Abstract

Objectives: To study the national prevalence of 5 developmental disabilities in children 3–17 years of age in the United States between 2019 and 2024 as well as changes in prevalence by selected demographic and socioeconomic characteristics.

Methods: Data come from the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), a nationally representative survey of the noninstitutionalized childhood population in the United States, with a focus on attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorder, learning disability, intellectual disability, and other developmental delays. All diagnoses are based on parents reporting what they've been told by a physician or other health care professional. Estimates were calculated overall using survey weights and stratified by select demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Trends were calculated using unadjusted and adjusted logistic regressions.

Results: From 2019–2020 to 2023–2024, even after adjustment, there was an overall increase in the prevalence of any parent-reported developmental disability (16.7% to 20.5%, $p < .001$), attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (9.5% to 12.0%, $p < .001$), autism spectrum disorder (3.1% to 4.5%, $p < .001$), learning disability (7.6% to 8.8%, $p < .001$), and for any other developmental delay (5.5% to 6.4%, $p < .05$). There was not a significant increase in intellectual disability during this time period.

Conclusions: The parent-reported prevalence of developmental disability among US children aged 3 to 17 years increased between 2019 and 2024. These increases could be related to earlier detection and awareness.

Article Summary:

From the 2019–2024 NHIS, there was a 22.2% increase in the prevalence of developmental disabilities among children aged 3–17.

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Introduction

Developmental disabilities are a collection of lifelong conditions caused by impairments across multiple domains, including physical, learning, language, or behavior areas. Nationally representative data have shown that approximately 1-in-6 US children have a developmental disability diagnosis.¹ Timely data are essential to capturing changes in the prevalence of developmental disabilities and can help inform the need for services and interventions,² which have been shown to improve long-term outcomes for children with developmental disabilities.³

This study builds upon the prior 2009–2017 analysis¹ by using updated national survey data to estimate changes in selected developmental disabilities among US children from 2019 to 2024. This article seeks to 1) understand changes in prevalence of developmental disabilities over this time period, and 2) examine which demographic and socioeconomic characteristics are associated with changes in prevalence.

Methods

Data are from the 2019–2024 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), a nationally representative household survey of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. NHIS is conducted continuously throughout the year by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). Interviews are typically initiated face-to-face in respondents' homes with follow-ups conducted over the telephone as needed. From each household sampled, one adult and one child (between the ages of 0–17 years) are randomly selected to be the subject of a detailed health interview. An adult who is responsible for the health of the child (typically their parent) completes the interview on behalf of the sampled child. NHIS data collection procedures were disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic; from April through June 2020 all interviews were conducted by telephone only, and from July through December interviews were attempted by telephone first, with follow-ups to complete interviews by personal visit.⁴ In total, 68.0% of interviews in 2020 were conducted at least partially by telephone, compared to 31.7% in 2019. Between 2019–2024, the average response rate for the child questionnaire was 48.8%.^{5,6} NHIS data collection was approved by the NCHS Ethics Review Board.

Children aged 3–17 years were included in the analytic sample (total 2019–2024 unweighted sample size: $n=39,217$). Weighted prevalence estimates were calculated overall and in two-year intervals for any developmental disability and each of the five developmental disabilities. All presented estimates met NCHS data presentation standards for proportions.⁷

Measures

Diagnosed developmental disabilities: Parents were asked whether they had ever been told by a doctor or health care professional that their child had a series of developmental disabilities, including attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD), intellectual disability (ID), and any other development delay (DD). Parents were asked whether they had been told by a representative from a school or a health professional that their child had a learning disability (LD). Children

whose parents indicated their child had one or more of these five developmental disabilities were considered to have “any developmental disability”.

Selected demographic and socioeconomic characteristics: All characteristics were parent-reported and included age group (years) (3–5, 6–11, 12–17), sex (male, female), race and ethnicity (non-Hispanic Asian, non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic White, Hispanic), family income (categorized as <200% or ≥200% federal poverty level (FPL) using NHIS imputed files⁸ (when missing), and urbanization level⁹ (large central or fringe metropolitan, medium or small metropolitan, nonmetropolitan). Race and ethnicity were included as previous research has found differences in prevalence.¹ The groups included were intended to allow comparability between studies.

Statistical Analysis

Analyses were conducted in Stata SE 18.0¹⁰ using NHIS sampling weights to generate nationally representative estimates accounting for the complex sampling design of the NHIS. Prevalence estimates of each developmental disability and any developmental disability were calculated in total and stratified by all examined demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Linear and quadratic trends by survey year were tested using logistic regressions. Two-sided statistical tests with $p < .05$ were considered statistically significant.

Separate multivariable logistic regression models estimated the associations between two-year intervals and the prevalence of any developmental disability and each of the five developmental disabilities measured. Models were adjusted for age group, sex, race and ethnicity, family income, and urbanization level, as categorized as above.

Previous reports using NHIS data defined “any developmental disability” using ten developmental disabilities, but not all were assessed in recent years. A supplemental figure is included providing long-term trends from 2009–2024 based on just the five developmental disabilities included in this study (Supplemental Figure 1).

Results

Among children aged 3–17 years, the prevalence of any diagnosed developmental disability increased from 16.73% in 2019–2020 to 20.45% in 2023–2024 (Figure 1, $p < .001$). During this same period, there were statistically significant increases for ADHD (9.52%–12.00%), ASD (3.14%–4.47%), LD (7.60%–8.83%), and any other DD (5.47%–6.35%) (Figure 1). In adjusted models, these increases remained statistically significant for each developmental disability examined (Supplemental Table 1). There was no change in the prevalence of ID in unadjusted or adjusted models.

Overall

The prevalence of any diagnosed developmental disability increased among all demographic groups examined, except for non-Hispanic Black children ($p = .26$) and children in nonmetropolitan areas ($p = .13$) (Table 1). The largest significant relative increases in prevalence were observed among non-Hispanic Asian children (73.1 percent increase),

children 3–5 years (32.3 percent increase), children with family income $\geq 200\%$ FPL (29.5 percent increase), and Hispanic children (26.0 percent increase).

Autism Spectrum Disorder

The overall prevalence of ASD increased 42.4% between 2019–2020 to 2023–2024 (Table 2, $p<.001$). In addition, the prevalence of diagnosed ASD increased among all demographic groups examined, except for children 6–11 years of age ($p=.06$), and non-Hispanic Asian children ($p=.58$). The largest significant relative increases in prevalence were observed among children 3–5 years of age (120.5 percent increase), children in nonmetropolitan areas (85.8 percent increase), children with family income $<200\%$ FPL (60.8 percent increase), and girls (58.3 percent increase).

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

The overall prevalence of ADHD increased 26.1% between 2019–2020 to 2023–2024 (Table 3, $p<.001$). In addition, the prevalence of diagnosed ADHD increased among all demographic groups examined, except for children 3–5 years of age ($p=.10$), non-Hispanic Black ($p=.72$), non-Hispanic Asian children ($p=.05$), children in nonmetropolitan areas ($p=.11$) and with family income $<200\%$ FPL ($p=.33$). The largest significant relative increases in prevalence were observed among children with family income $>200\%$ FPL (43.7 percent increase), non-Hispanic White children (35.2 percent increase), children in large metropolitan areas (30.2 percent increase), and girls (30.4 percent increase).

Intellectual Disability

The overall prevalence of diagnosed ID increased 6.7% between 2019–2020 and 2023–2024 (Table 4). However, this increase was not statistically significant ($p=.26$). Moreover, the prevalence of diagnosed ID did not change significantly for any demographic group examined.

Learning Disability

The overall prevalence of LD increased 16.2% between 2019–2020 to 2023–2024 (Table 5, $p<.001$). In addition, the prevalence of diagnosed LD increased among all demographic groups examined, except for children 3–5 years of age ($p=.64$), non-Hispanic Black ($p=.32$), and children in medium or small metropolitan areas ($p=.13$). The largest significant relative increases in prevalence were observed among non-Hispanic Asian children (111.5 percent increase), children with family income $<200\%$ FPL (24.7 percent increase), children in nonmetropolitan areas (19.1 percent increase), and boys (18.0 percent increase).

Other Developmental Delay

The overall prevalence of any other DD increased 16.1% between 2019–2020 to 2023–2024 (Table 6, $p=.02$). Increases were observed for approximately half of the demographic characteristics examined with the largest significant relative increases seen for non-Hispanic Asian children (129.0 percent increase), children in nonmetropolitan areas (48.4 percent increase), children with family income $<200\%$ FPL (28.0 percent increase), and children 6–11 years of age (26.8 percent increase).

Discussion

Using data from the 2019–2024 NHIS, an estimated 1-in-5 US children aged 3–17 years had a developmental disability diagnosis (20.45%) in 2023–2024. Given changes to the number of developmental disabilities measured by NHIS starting in 2019, the overall prevalence of any developmental disability is not directly comparable to previously published NHIS developmental disabilities estimates.^{1,11} However, estimates for any and all five developmental disabilities assessed were higher in 2023–2024 than the last observed time interval in the previous report (2015–2017).¹ Consistent in both reports was a significant increasing trend over the study period for both ASD and ADHD. Unlike the previous report, a significant increasing trend was also observed for LD and any other DD, but no increase was seen in ID.

The current study observed an increase in developmental disability prevalence but was not designed to determine why the increase occurred. However, previous research has suggested that changes in diagnostic criteria and provider practices, as well as increased parental and societal awareness, may contribute to increases in the prevalence of developmental disabilities.^{12–13}

By spanning the COVID-pandemic, the current study provides perspective for previous work that highlighted the impact of changes and disruptions in the delivery of services for children with developmental disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁴ These challenges may be more pronounced among children with developmental disabilities given their greater health care needs compared to their peers.¹⁵ Previous research has also suggested changes in the observed prevalence of developmental disabilities may have been linked to increased time parents spent with their children and changes in parents' perceptions of their child's behavioral and emotional functioning.¹⁶ Together, these factors may have influenced both identification and reporting of developmental disabilities during the study period.

Consistent with the previous report, children from both lower and higher income groupings and metropolitan areas had a significant increase in prevalence of any developmental disability over the study period, as did the oldest children (12–17 years of age). However, unlike the previous report, children in the youngest two age groups (3–5 and 6–11) also had a significant increase in any developmental disability. This may be the product of increased awareness and earlier screening in recent years.¹⁷ Early identification of developmental disabilities has been shown to facilitate access to interventions and support that can improve long-term functional outcomes.^{18,19}

Non-Hispanic Asian children also had an increase in the likelihood of being diagnosed with a developmental disability over the study period. This study is the first in which an adequate sample size was available to explore changes in prevalence for non-Hispanic Asian children. This study also found a significant increase among girls for the first time, lending support to a recent birth registry trend paper finding comparable rates between boys and girls.²⁰ Future studies could examine factors that may have contributed to recent changes in the rates of developmental disabilities diagnosis by sex.²¹

Strengths and Limitations

The use of NHIS data for the current study provides a large sample size to explore both the prevalence of several selected developmental disabilities overall and across demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. The NHIS provides timely, nationally representative estimates of the non-institutionalized population that can be used to better understand children with developmental disabilities and their families.

Despite these strengths, this study is not without limitations. The use of parent-report of a previously received diagnosis may be prone to recall biases, which may be particularly true among the oldest children who received a diagnosis early in their lives that they may have outgrown.²² Diagnoses were not clinically validated either through medical or educational records. Although all estimates reported were reliable, meeting NCHS data presentation standards for proportions⁷, some statistical tests may have still been underpowered. Additionally, because the data were limited to children aged 3–17 years, the true population burden of developmental disabilities may be underestimated among children of all ages. Finally, the current study reported on the lifetime prevalence of developmental disabilities to allow comparability to previous reports.^{1,11} However, future research may consider exploring children with a current diagnosis, as some children may have lost their diagnosis²³ and may no longer be in need of services or interventions. Moreover, children who have lost their diagnosis may look different demographically than those who have retained their diagnosis.²³

Conclusions

The percentage of children diagnosed with a developmental disability increased significantly between 2019 and 2024. In 2023–2024, approximately 1-in-5 children had a developmental disability diagnosis. Of note, unlike previous reports, significant subgroup increases were observed among younger children, Non-Hispanic Asian children, and girls. Given this increasing prevalence, continued monitoring of developmental disability trends in the population may be critical in determining the adequacy and accessibility of services and interventions, particularly among these subgroups of children who have experienced significant increases in prevalence in recent years.

Supplementary Material

Refer to Web version on PubMed Central for supplementary material.

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Abbreviations:

ASD	Autism spectrum disorder
ADHD	Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder
DD	Developmental delay

ID	Intellectual disability
LD	Learning disability
NHIS	National Health Interview Survey

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What's Known on this Subject:

Developmental disabilities have increased among children in the United States in recent years. Timely data is essential to capturing any new changes in the prevalence of developmental disabilities and can help inform the need for services and interventions.

What this Study Adds:

This study presents timely, nationally representative estimates of the prevalence of developmental disability, including demographic and socioeconomic trends.

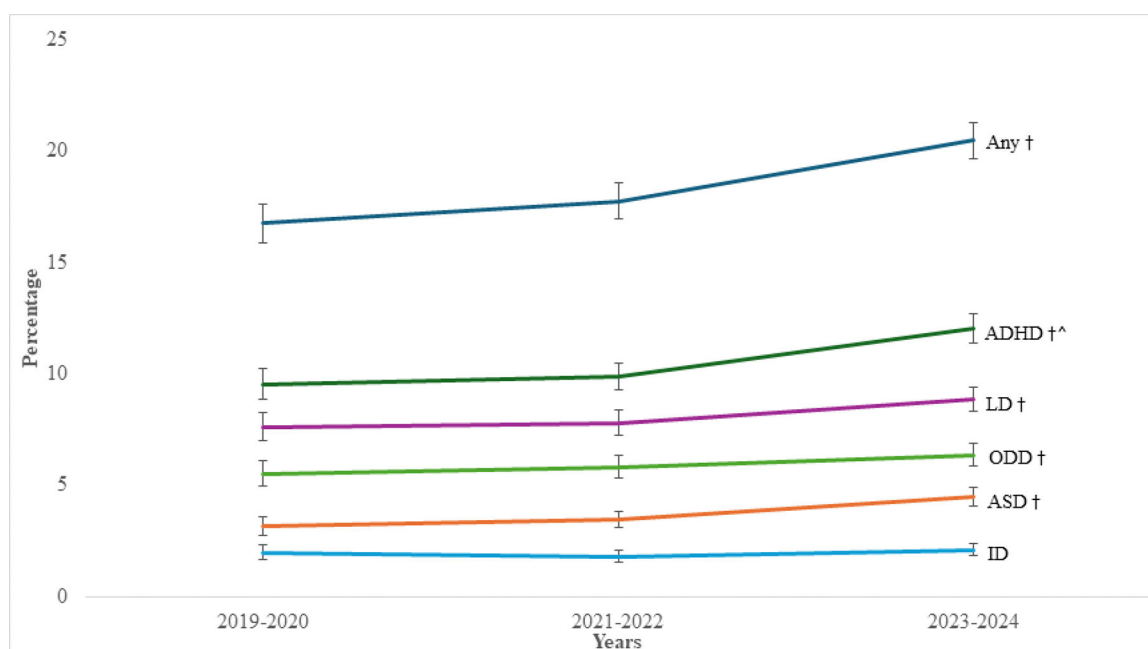


Figure 1.

Trends in Prevalence of Developmental Disabilities in Children Aged 3 to 17 years: United States, 2019–2024.

† Significant linear trend over time ($p < .05$).

^ Significant quadratic trend over time ($p < .05$).

ADHD is attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, ASD is autism spectrum disorder, ODD is other developmental delay, ID is intellectual disability, LD is learning disability. “Any” includes children with one or more of the five developmental disabilities examined.

Table 1.

Trends in Prevalence of Any Developmental Disability in Children aged 3 to 17 years, by selected demographic characteristics: United States, 2019–2024.

	n (unweighted)	2019–2020 % (95% CI)	2021–2022 % (95% CI)	2023–2024 % (95% CI)	Percent Change 2019–2020 versus 2023– 2024	p-value Linear trend	p-value Quadratic trend
Total	39,217	16.73 (15.87–17.62)	17.74 (16.96–18.54)	20.45 (19.65–21.27)	22.2	<.001	.11
Child characteristics							
Age groups, years							
3–5	6,955	9.91 (8.37–11.64)	9.75 (8.43–11.21)	13.11 (11.57–14.78)	32.3	.008	.06
6–11	14,311	16.81 (15.36–18.35)	17.58 (16.34–18.86)	20.45 (19.17–21.79)	21.7	<.001	.22
12–17	17,951	19.85 (18.53–21.24)	21.64 (20.35–22.96)	23.66 (22.42–24.94)	19.2	<.001	.94
Sex							
Boys	20,203	21.24 (19.91–22.63)	22.00 (20.80–23.23)	25.59 (24.37–26.84)	20.5	<.001	.07
Girls	18,998	11.99 (10.95–13.10)	13.32 (12.42–14.26)	15.03 (14.08–16.02)	25.4	<.001	.84
Race and ethnicity							
Non-Hispanic Asian	2,614	6.10 (4.17–8.58)	6.15 (4.60–8.03)	10.56 (8.34–13.13)	73.1	.007	.12
Non-Hispanic Black	4,068	17.57 (14.98–20.41)	18.24 (15.75–20.94)	19.65 (17.29–22.19)	11.8	.26	.82
Non-Hispanic White	19,964	18.78 (17.56–20.04)	19.61 (18.56–20.71)	22.88 (21.69–24.11)	21.8	<.001	.09
Hispanic	10,068	13.97 (12.36–15.70)	15.45 (13.95–17.05)	17.60 (16.28–18.98)	26.0	.002	.79
Family income							
<200% FPL	13,003	19.35 (17.86–20.90)	20.61 (19.17–22.10)	22.11 (20.51–23.21)	14.3	.005	.89
≥200% FPL	26,214	15.03 (14.05–16.05)	15.97 (15.03–16.95)	19.47 (18.64–20.65)	29.5	<.001	.03
Urbanization level							
Large metropolitan	21,551	15.29 (14.22–16.40)	16.47 (15.46–17.52)	19.21 (18.17–20.27)	25.6	<.001	.28
Medium or small metropolitan	11,885	17.52 (15.95–19.18)	18.93 (17.47–20.47)	21.48 (19.93–23.09)	22.6	.001	.58
Nonmetropolitan	5,781	20.72 (17.76–23.92)	20.41 (18.20–22.76)	23.35 (21.21–25.60)	12.7	.13	.26

NOTE: CI is confidence interval, FPL is federal poverty level.

Any developmental disability includes children with one or more of the following conditions: attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorder, learning disability, intellectual disability, and any other developmental delay.

Table 2.

Trends in Prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder in Children aged 3 to 17 years, by selected demographic characteristics: United States, 2019–2024.

	n (unweighted)	2019–2020 % (95% CI)	2021–2022 % (95% CI)	2023–2024 % (95% CI)	Percent Change 2019–2020 versus 2023– 2024	p-value Linear trend	p-value Quadratic trend
Total	1,473	3.14 (2.75–3.57)	3.43 (3.08–3.80)	4.47 (4.07–4.90)	42.4	<.001	.81
Child characteristics							
Age groups, years							
3–5	253	2.39 (1.71–3.25)	2.81 (2.10–3.69)	5.27 (4.29–6.40)	120.5	<.001	.81
6–11	567	3.50 (2.82–4.28)	3.63 (3.05–4.29)	4.39 (3.75–5.11)	25.4	.06	.28
12–17	653	3.15 (2.57–3.83)	3.53 (3.00–4.12)	4.19 (3.62–4.82)	33.0	.002	.23
Sex							
Boys	1,121	4.65 (4.00–5.36)	5.15 (4.56–5.79)	6.38 (5.73–7.07)	37.2	<.001	.94
Girls	352	1.56 (1.19–2.02)	1.64 (1.30–2.04)	2.47 (2.03–2.97)	58.3	<.001	.57
Race and ethnicity							
Non-Hispanic Asian	70	2.94 (1.51–5.11)	2.45 (1.49–3.80)	3.39 (2.08–5.18)	15.3	.58	.82
Non-Hispanic Black	169	3.64 (2.23–5.58)	3.62 (2.63–4.84)	5.46 (4.09–7.12)	50.0	.02	.78
Non-Hispanic White	778	3.17 (2.68–3.72)	3.40 (2.92–3.92)	4.37 (3.85–4.93)	37.8	.001	.85
Hispanic	353	2.88 (2.19–3.73)	3.37 (2.67–4.19)	4.22 (3.50–5.05)	46.5	.005	.78
Family income							
<200% FPL	621	3.65 (2.93–4.50)	4.31 (3.62–5.10)	5.87 (5.10–6.71)	60.8	<.001	.62
≥200% FPL	852	2.81 (2.39–3.27)	2.88 (2.50–3.31)	3.64 (3.20–4.13)	29.5	.002	.74
Urbanization level							
Large metropolitan	777	3.15 (2.60–3.77)	3.17 (2.71–3.68)	4.49 (3.95–5.08)	42.5	<.001	.30
Medium or small metropolitan	484	3.48 (2.82–4.23)	3.93 (3.30–4.64)	4.49 (3.76–5.32)	29.0	.01	.48
Nonmetropolitan	212	2.33 (1.43–3.57)	3.38 (2.51–4.46)	4.33 (3.37–5.46)	85.8	.01	.68

NOTE: CI is confidence interval, FPL is federal poverty level.

Table 3.

Trends in Prevalence of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder in Children aged 3 to 17 years, by selected demographic characteristics: United States, 2019–2024.

	n (unweighted)	2019–2020 % (95% CI)	2021–2022 % (95% CI)	2023–2024 % (95% CI)	Percent Change 2019–2020 versus 2023–2024	p-value Linear trend	p-value Quadratic trend
Child characteristics							
Total	4,327	9.52 (8.86–10.20)	9.87 (9.29–10.48)	12 (11.36–12.67)	26.1	<.001	.65
Age groups, years							
3–5	113	1.32 (0.86–1.93)	1.35 (0.86–2.01)	2.02 (1.42–2.80)	53.0	.10	.53
6–11	1,545	9.70 (8.48–11.02)	9.53 (8.60–10.51)	11.69 (10.66–12.79)	20.5	.004	.21
12–17	2,669	13.19 (12.13–14.30)	14.21 (13.18–15.28)	16.66 (15.58–17.79)	26.3	<.001	.41
Sex							
Boys	2,882	12.34 (11.37–13.36)	12.74 (11.81–13.71)	15.27 (14.26–16.33)	23.7	<.001	.33
Girls	1,440	6.55 (5.77–7.42)	6.90 (6.27–7.57)	8.54 (7.78–9.35)	30.4	<.001	.57
Race and ethnicity							
Non-Hispanic Asian	82	2.45 (1.25–4.28)	2.53 (1.53–3.93)	4.39 (3.01–6.18)	79.2	.05	.97
Non-Hispanic Black	420	9.30 (7.44–11.45)	10.12 (8.82–12.20)	9.82 (8.16–11.70)	5.6	.72	.91
Non-Hispanic White	2,716	11.13 (10.16–12.15)	11.76 (10.94–12.61)	15.05 (14.06–16.09)	35.2	<.001	.57
Hispanic	825	7.34 (6.29–8.51)	7.59 (6.50–8.81)	8.31 (7.34–9.36)	13.2	.08	.71
Family income							
<200% FPL	1,617	11.42 (10.20–12.72)	10.98 (9.90–12.12)	12.06 (11.27–12.90)	5.6	.33	.63
≥200% FPL	2,710	8.28 (7.53–9.07)	9.19 (8.51–9.92)	11.90 (10.82–13.04)	43.7	<.001	.18
Urbanization level							
Large metropolitan	2,105	8.37 (7.60–9.20)	8.86 (8.11–9.65)	10.90 (10.08–11.76)	30.2	<.001	.97
Medium or small metropolitan	1,435	10.21 (9.07–11.45)	10.75 (9.64–11.94)	12.82 (11.49–14.25)	25.6	.001	.90
Nonmetropolitan	787	12.51 (9.95–15.45)	12.18 (10.44–14.10)	14.78 (12.99–16.72)	18.1	.11	.28

NOTE: CI is confidence interval, FPL is federal poverty level.

Table 4. Trends in Prevalence of Intellectual Disability in Children aged 3 to 17 years, by selected demographic characteristics: United States, 2019–2024.

	n (unweighted)	2019–2020 % (95% CI)	2021–2022 % (95% CI)	2023–2024 % (95% CI)	Percent Change 2019–2020 versus 2023–2024	p-value Linear trend	p-value Quadratic trend
Total	744	1.95 (1.64–2.30)	1.76 (1.52–2.04)	2.08 (1.80–2.39)	6.7	.26	.50
Child characteristics							
Age groups, years							
3–5	95	1.22 (0.75–1.86)	1.01 (0.63–1.53)	1.57 (1.05–2.25)	28.7	.38	.13
6–11	241	2.03 (1.49–2.71)	1.61 (1.22–2.10)	1.87 (1.44–2.37)	–7.9	.91	.51
12–17	408	2.21 (1.73–2.78)	2.26 (1.83–2.75)	2.52 (2.07–3.03)	14.0	.28	.59
Sex							
Boys	477	2.45 (1.97–3.02)	2.12 (1.73–2.57)	2.71 (2.27–3.20)	10.6	.26	.31
Girls	267	1.42 (1.07–1.85)	1.39 (1.08–1.77)	1.43 (1.11–1.82)	0.7	.72	.78
Race and ethnicity							
Non-Hispanic Asian	23	0.54 (0.13–1.48)	0.69 (0.27–1.44)	1.21 (0.47–2.52)	124.1	.37	.53
Non-Hispanic Black	100	3.11 (1.91–4.78)	2.39 (1.58–3.46)	2.59 (1.65–3.85)	–16.7	.77	.46
Non-Hispanic White	373	1.85 (1.45–2.31)	1.58 (1.25–1.95)	2.11 (1.74–2.53)	14.1	.20	.27
Hispanic	188	1.78 (1.23–2.50)	1.87 (1.38–2.47)	1.81 (1.34–2.41)	1.7	.75	.82
Family income							
<200% FPL	340	2.52 (1.89–3.15)	2.32 (1.80–2.84)	3.05 (2.43–3.66)	21.0	.22	.21
≥200% FPL	404	1.57 (1.24–1.91)	1.42 (1.14–1.69)	1.51 (1.23–1.80)	–3.8	.79	.47
Urbanization level							
Large metropolitan	375	1.98 (1.56–2.49)	1.54 (1.23–1.92)	1.87 (1.53–2.28)	–5.6	.87	.31
Medium or small metropolitan	248	2.09 (1.58–2.72)	1.93 (1.50–2.43)	2.25 (1.74–2.86)	7.7	.51	.70
Nonmetropolitan	121	1.47 (0.78–2.49)	2.32 (1.59–3.28)	2.58 (1.73–3.70)	75.5	.07	.36

NOTE: CI is confidence interval, FPL is federal poverty level.

Table 5. Trends in Prevalence of Learning Disability in Children aged 3 to 17 years, by selected demographic characteristics: United States, 2019–2024.

	n (unweighted)	2019–2020 % (95% CI)	2021–2022 % (95% CI)	2023–2024 % (95% CI)	Percent Change 2019–2020 versus 2023–2024	p-value Linear trend	p-value Quadratic trend
Total	3,192	7.6 (6.98–8.25)	7.78 (7.21–8.39)	8.83 (8.29–9.39)	16.2	<.001	.71
Child characteristics							
Age groups, years							
3–5	248	3.53 (2.61–4.67)	3.09 (2.28–4.09)	3.89 (3.08–4.85)	10.2	.64	.65
6–11	1,160	7.72 (6.73–8.81)	8.03 (7.13–9.00)	8.73 (7.85–9.67)	13.1	.02	.81
12–17	1,784	9.38 (8.38–10.46)	9.75 (8.84–10.71)	11.09 (10.17–12.06)	18.2	.001	.54
Sex							
Boys	2,015	9.19 (8.26–10.18)	9.29 (8.43–10.22)	10.93 (10.09–11.80)	18.9	.004	.67
Girls	1,174	5.93 (5.18–6.75)	6.20 (5.52–6.94)	6.62 (5.96–7.34)	11.6	.007	.24
Race and ethnicity							
Non-Hispanic Asian	88	2.17 (1.19–3.61)	2.82 (1.83–4.14)	4.59 (3.12–6.48)	111.5	.009	.85
Non-Hispanic Black	381	9.22 (7.24–11.53)	9.78 (7.72–12.09)	10.41 (8.63–12.43)	12.9	.32	.37
Non-Hispanic White	1,688	7.87 (7.00–8.81)	7.24 (6.52–8.01)	9.02 (8.24–9.85)	14.6	.005	.55
Hispanic	819	7.32 (6.22–8.55)	8.26 (7.17–9.45)	8.61 (7.63–9.66)	17.6	.03	.82
Family income							
<200% FPL	1,430	10.03 (8.87–11.20)	10.80 (9.66–11.94)	11.12 (10.12–12.11)	10.9	.04	.35
≥200% FPL	1,762	6.00 (5.32–6.68)	5.92 (5.33–6.51)	7.48 (6.85–8.10)	24.7	<.001	.61
Urbanization level							
Large metropolitan	1,594	7.06 (6.24–7.95)	7.15 (6.42–7.94)	8.38 (7.69–9.10)	18.7	.001	.99
Medium or small metropolitan	990	7.74 (6.71–8.88)	7.90 (6.90–9.00)	8.60 (7.60–9.69)	11.1	.13	.54
Nonmetropolitan	608	9.42 (7.58–11.54)	10.24 (8.45–12.26)	11.22 (9.70–12.89)	19.1	.04	.81

NOTE: CI is confidence interval, FPL is federal poverty level.

Table 6.

Trends in Prevalence of Other Developmental Delay in Children aged 3 to 17 years, by selected demographic characteristics: United States, 2019–2024.

	n (unweighted)	2019–2020 % (95% CI)	2021–2022 % (95% CI)	2023–2024 % (95% CI)	Percent Change 2019–2020 versus 2023– 2024	p-value Linear trend	p-value Quadratic trend
Child characteristics							
Total	2,221	5.47 (4.92–6.06)	5.81 (5.32–6.33)	6.35 (5.87–6.86)	16.1	.02	.47
Age groups, years							
3–5	508	6.97 (5.63–8.52)	6.71 (5.62–7.93)	8.22 (6.97–9.61)	17.9	.17	.48
6–11	883	5.57 (4.74–6.49)	6.26 (5.47–7.12)	7.06 (6.23–7.97)	26.8	.02	.95
12–17	830	4.67 (3.96–5.48)	4.96 (4.26–5.74)	4.86 (4.27–5.50)	4.1	.78	.04
Sex							
Boys	1,454	7.14 (6.25–8.11)	7.15 (6.40–7.95)	8.36 (7.58–9.20)	17.1	.04	.81
Girls	764	3.70 (3.09–4.38)	4.41 (3.85–5.03)	4.25 (3.70–4.85)	14.9	.24	.10
Race and ethnicity							
Non-Hispanic Asian	96	2.10 (1.20–3.42)	2.70 (1.74–3.99)	4.81 (3.39–6.60)	129.0	.01	.93
Non-Hispanic Black	228	5.82 (4.11–7.97)	6.65 (5.02–8.59)	6.68 (5.20–8.44)	14.8	.48	.06
Non-Hispanic White	1,233	5.86 (5.15–6.63)	6.35 (5.67–7.09)	6.6 (5.91–7.33)	12.6	.13	.47
Hispanic	502	5.24 (4.09–6.59)	4.68 (3.85–5.62)	5.78 (4.92–6.75)	10.3	.43	.35
Family income							
<200% FPL	858	5.76 (4.80–6.72)	6.94 (6.00–7.89)	7.37 (6.50–8.24)	28.0	.01	.16
≥200% FPL	1,363	5.28 (4.63–5.93)	5.11 (4.53–5.68)	5.75 (5.16–6.34)	8.9	.32	.67
Urbanization level							
Large metropolitan	1,148	5.39 (4.67–6.19)	5.48 (4.84–6.18)	6.19 (5.57–6.86)	14.8	.09	.79
Medium or small metropolitan	693	5.89 (4.83–7.09)	6.35 (5.42–7.39)	6.3 (5.42–7.28)	7.0	.57	.44
Nonmetropolitan	380	4.81 (3.72–6.11)	5.94 (4.76–7.30)	7.14 (5.88–8.58)	48.4	.01	.79

NOTE: CI is confidence interval, FPL is federal poverty level.