



The Mental and Emotional Well-Being of Children: A Portrait of the Nation



Mental Health Status

The survey asked parents of children aged 2-17 years whether their child had been diagnosed with, and still had, any of 16 specific conditions, 7 of which were related to emotions, behavior, or development. For each condition, the survey asked parents whether a doctor had told them that their child had the condition and whether the child still had the condition.

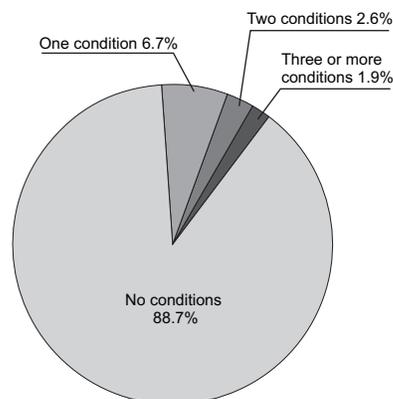
- **Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).** Children with these syndromes may have difficulty paying attention, be easily distracted and forgetful, have trouble listening and following directions, be impatient, and have trouble sitting still. Some of these children, those with ADD, only have difficulty with attention and organization. Others primarily have symptoms involving hyperactivity and impulsivity, and others have both. ADD/ADHD is the most common of the emotional, behavioral, and developmental conditions included in the survey: the parents of 6.4 percent of children reported that their children currently have this condition.

- **Anxiety Problems.** While all children may feel anxiety in specific situations, some children experience anxiety disor-

ders, including panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and phobias. Symptoms may include constant worry, obsessions, fear of making mistakes, and lack of self-confidence. The parents of 2.9 percent of children reported that their children currently have these problems.

- **Depression.** Like adults, children may experience sadness at times. Children may also experience debilitating depression, although this condition may express itself differently in children than in adults. Symptoms of depression in children include persistent sadness or an anxious or empty mood, decreased interest in their favorite activities, inability to concentrate, frequent complaints of headaches and stomachaches, and increased irritability, anger, or hostility. The parents of 2.0 percent of children report that their children have been diagnosed with and currently have depression.

Children Aged 2-17 Years with at Least One of Seven Emotional, Behavioral, or Developmental Conditions



- **Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)/Conduct Disorder.** Children with ODD show a pattern of uncooperative, defiant, and hostile behavior, especially toward adult authority figures. Children with ODD may have frequent tantrums, argue excessively with adults and question rules, and deliberately attempt to annoy or upset others. Children with conduct disorder also have difficulty following rules and behaving in socially acceptable ways. The parents of 3.3 percent of children report that their children currently have behavioral or conduct problems.

- **Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs)** includes a range of diagnoses, including Asperger's Syndrome, autism, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD). Children with autism have delays in language, communication, and social skills. Children with Asperger's disorder have impaired social skills but do not have speech or language delays. They often have

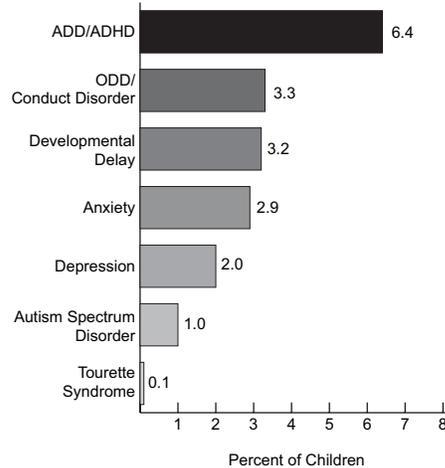


an intense interest in a single subject or topic. Children with pervasive developmental disorder have severe and persistent delays in language, communication, and social skills. The parents of 1.0 percent of children report that their children had ASDs at the time of the survey.

- **Developmental Delay** includes major delays in motor, language, social, or thinking skills. The parents of 3.2 percent of children reported that their child had a developmental delay at the time of the survey.
- **Tourette Syndrome.** Children may have body tics (quick, repeated involuntary movements) or vocal tics (involuntary speech or sounds), but those with Tourette Syndrome have both, and may also have difficulties with attention and learning or develop obsessions and compulsions. The parents of 0.1 percent of children report that their children currently have Tourette Syndrome.

In total, 11.3 percent of children aged 2-17 years were reported to have at least one of these seven conditions at the time of the survey.

Prevalence of Diagnosed Emotional, Behavioral, or Developmental Conditions Among Children Aged 2-17 Years

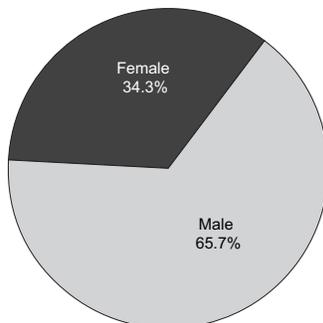




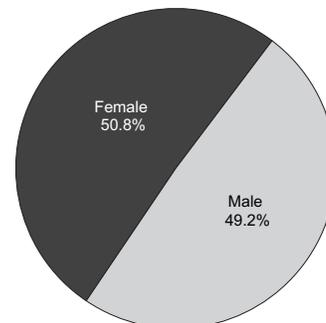
Characteristics of Children with Emotional, Behavioral, or Developmental Conditions

The population of children with emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions differs from that of children without these conditions in many ways. Boys are disproportionately likely to be diagnosed with these conditions (65.7 percent of children with one of the seven conditions is male, compared to 49.2 percent of children without one of the conditions). Children with these conditions are more likely to be in the older age groups (because these conditions may not be diagnosed until middle childhood): of children with an emotional, behavioral, or developmental condition, 51.1 percent were 12 to 17 years old, compared to 37.3 percent of children with none of the conditions. In addition, children with these conditions are more likely to have low family incomes than children without them: of children with at least one emotional, behavioral, or developmental condition, 24.8 percent had family incomes below the Federal poverty level, compared to 17.1 percent of children without one of these conditions.

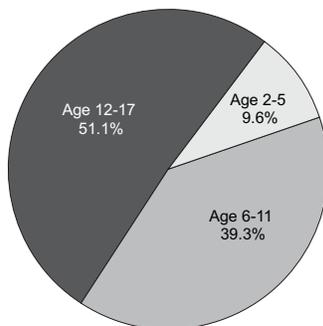
Children Aged 2-17 Years with Emotional, Behavioral, or Developmental Conditions, by Sex



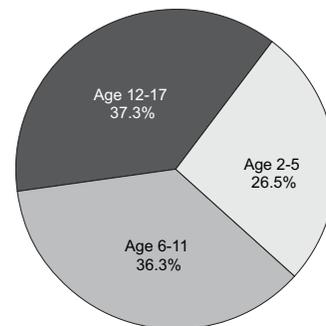
Children Aged 2-17 Years without Emotional, Behavioral, or Developmental Conditions, by Sex



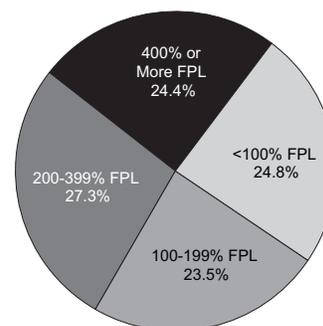
Children Aged 2-17 Years with Emotional, Behavioral, or Developmental Conditions, by Age



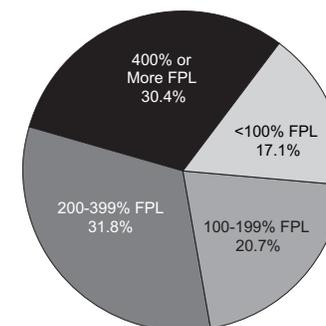
Children Aged 2-17 Years without Emotional, Behavioral, or Developmental Conditions, by Age



Children Aged 2-17 Years with Emotional, Behavioral, or Developmental Conditions, by Poverty Status*



Children Aged 2-17 Years without Emotional, Behavioral, or Developmental Conditions, by Poverty Status*



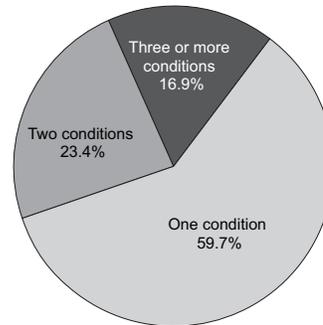
*Federal poverty level was \$20,650 for a family of four in 2007. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.



Overlap Among Emotional, Behavioral, or Developmental Conditions

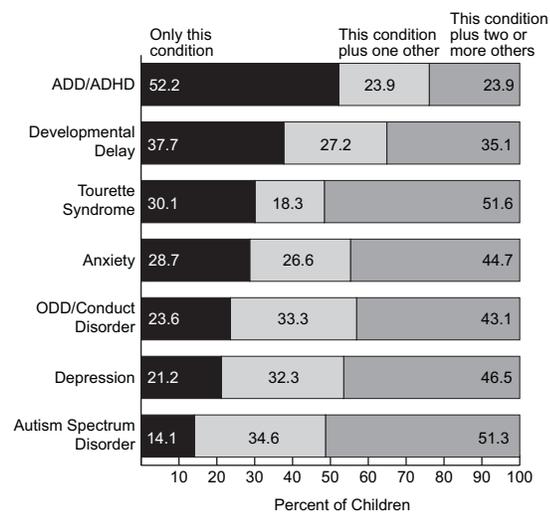
Children may have more than one of the seven emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions addressed in the survey. Overall, 40.3 percent of children with at least one of the 7 emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions were reported to have more than one of these diagnoses. Children with ADD/ADHD were the most likely to have only one emotional, behavioral, or developmental diagnosis, while the majority of children with the other six conditions had more than one condition.

Number of Emotional, Behavioral, or Developmental Conditions among Children with at Least One Condition*



*Including only the seven conditions asked about in the survey.

Overlap Within Emotional, Behavioral, and Developmental Diagnoses*



*Including only the seven conditions asked about in the survey.



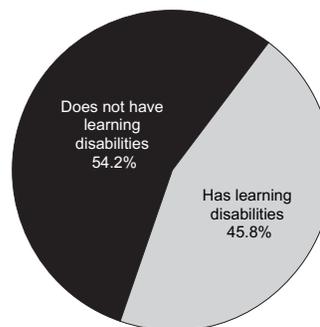


Overlap with Learning Disabilities

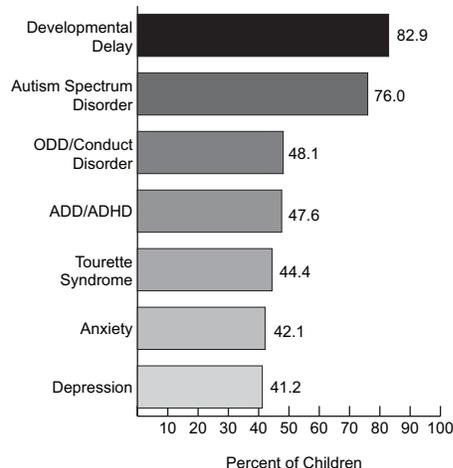
Children with emotional, behavioral or developmental conditions may also have learning disabilities. Learning disabilities may be caused by problems with the nervous system that interfere with the child's ability to receive, process, and communicate information. These disabilities are generally distinct from emotional, behavioral, and developmental conditions, but may overlap with ADD/ADHD or other conditions. The survey asked whether parents of children who were at least 3 years old had been told by a doctor, health care provider, teacher, or school official that their child had learning disabilities. Overall, 45.8 percent of children with at least one of the seven emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions also have a learning disability; among children without emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions, the prevalence of learning disabilities was 2.7 percent.

Of the seven emotional, behavioral, and developmental conditions addressed here, the condition that is most likely to overlap with learning disabilities is developmental delay; 82.9 percent of children with developmental delay were also reported to have learning disabilities. A majority (76.0 percent) of children with autism spectrum disorders have learning disabilities as well.

Prevalence of Learning Disabilities Among Children Aged 3-17 Years with Emotional, Behavioral, or Developmental Conditions



Prevalence of Learning Disabilities among Children Aged 3-17 Years with Emotional, Behavioral, or Developmental Conditions

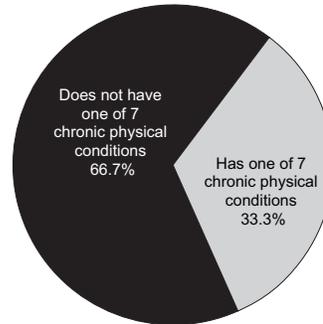




Overlap with Physical Health Conditions

Children with emotional, behavioral, and developmental conditions may have chronic physical conditions as well. The survey asked parents whether their children had been diagnosed with any of seven physical health conditions: asthma; diabetes; bone, joint, or muscle problems; hearing problems; vision problems; epilepsy or seizure disorder; and brain injury or concussion. Of children who have an emotional, behavioral, or developmental condition, 33.3 percent have at least one of these physical health conditions as well. Among children aged 2-17 years without an emotional, behavioral, or developmental diagnosis, 11.7 percent have one of these physical health conditions.

Prevalence of Chronic Physical Conditions* Among Children with Emotional, Behavioral, or Developmental Conditions



**Of the 7 conditions asked about in the survey: asthma; diabetes; bone, joint, or muscle problems; hearing problems; vision problems; epilepsy or seizure disorder; and brain injury or concussion*

