

National Autism Indicators Report:

The Intersection of Autism, Health, Poverty and Racial Inequity

APRIL 2022

Key Findings

We found that household income appears to be a very important factor for understanding health disparities for people with autism, as it is associated with differences in health status, insurance coverage, medical expenditures, and healthcare access. The report also shows that autism, poverty, and race/ethnicity appear to be risk factors for poor health and healthcare outcomes individually and in combination.

We present key findings on income-based differences in health and health care between **children with autism versus those without autism** and between **white children with autism versus BIPOC children with autism**.

Findings by Chapter:

Household Income

Does household income look the same for children with autism versus children without autism?

- Over half of the children with autism lived in lower-income households and one in four were poor, which was higher than the percentage of children without autism who lived in lower-income and poor households.

Does household income look the same for BIPOC children with autism versus white children with autism?

- A larger percentage of children with autism from lower-income households were BIPOC, compared to the overall population of children with autism.

Health Status

Do income-based differences in health outcomes look the same for children with autism versus children without autism?

- Children with autism had poorer overall health and dental health, more chronic health difficulties, and more health conditions than children without autism, regardless of income.
- As household income increased, so too did the percentage of children with excellent health.
- Autism-based differences in excellent overall health and dental health were smallest among high-income households, with the proportion of high-income children with autism with excellent dental health exceeding those of high-income children without autism.

Do income-based differences in health look the same for BIPOC children with autism versus white children with autism?

- Across all income groups, a greater percentage of BIPOC children with autism had poorer overall health, poorer dental health, and more severe autism than white children with autism.
- A greater percentage of poor and near-poor BIPOC children had poorer health, compared with their middle- and high-income BIPOC counterparts.