

# Autism Outcomes Are Worse Among Poor and Minority Teens

**Paul Shattuck, April 2019**



**Life Course Outcomes**  
Research Program



# National Autism Data Center

We seek  
to be

THE source for useful, trustworthy statistics

We do  
this by

Stakeholder  
engagement

Making great  
info products

Savvy  
marketing

So that

Problems are framed,  
awareness is raised

Policies & Programs are  
grounded in data

In order  
to

Support systems-, policy- and program-level efforts  
to generate measurable improvements in key  
population-level indicators across the life course



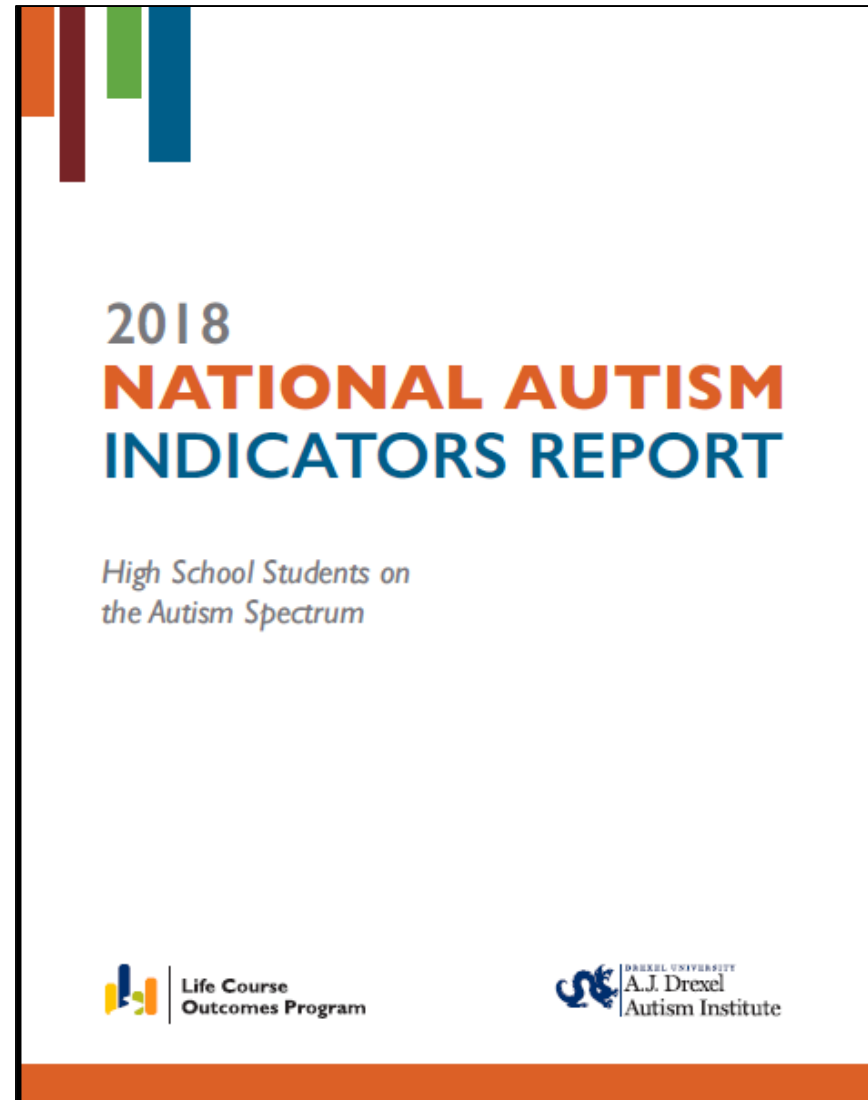
## Why a Data Center?

- Billions spent on services, no population-level data on needs & impacts
  - What do people need vs. what they get?
  - What are the outcomes?
- “A needy population doesn’t count until someone counts it”
- Are we “moving the needle”? We need *gauges* to tell



Extra copies today

[www.drexel.edu/  
AutismOutcomes  
/AutismIndicators  
2018](http://www.drexel.edu/AutismOutcomes/AutismIndicators2018)



Youth from households with low income

Struggling financially

**40-46%**

lived in households with income below 185% of the federal poverty level

Received public benefits

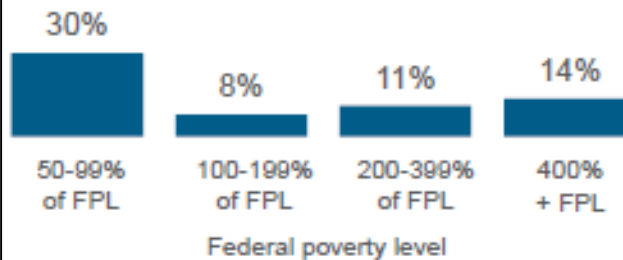
**1 in 4**

lived in a home that received at least one form of public assistance



Teens with ASD from the lowest income households were the most likely to have unmet health care needs.

NSCH 2016



Source: National Survey of Children's Health 2016



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## Minority youth

Highest rate of  
unmet needs

**27%**

of black or African  
American teens had unmet  
healthcare needs

Language minority

**14%**

lived in a home where a  
language other than English  
was regularly used

Black teens more likely had difficulty  
with health and development:

- Communication
- Self-care & adaptive behaviors
- Neighborhood independence



## Take-Home Points

- ASD does not affect all equally
- Almost half of youth population are in low-income households
- Poverty-disability nexus: 2-way street
- Services and outcomes are generally worse for minority youth



## Recommendations

- NOT primarily a clinical issue
- Systems improvement = priority
- Transition Pathways Initiative is example of a systems approach
- Increase HRSA's ASD budget
- Population-level data needed to see if we're moving the needle on outcomes

