

## **Why are there so many children with ASD?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that about 1 in 68 children in the United States have ASD. This number has risen drastically in the last decades. Why is this?

- When the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) was revised in the 1990s, the definition was deliberately broadened to include more people who could benefit from supports. Previously, many people would not have been “severe” enough to qualify for the diagnosis. This is the main reason the numbers have risen.
- There is also much more public awareness of ASD and less social stigma around the diagnosis.
- There have been active efforts in the past decades to screen for and diagnose ASD earlier and to provide interventions and supports.



