

# Children with Special Needs: Access to Services

## Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) Ages 1-17 Receiving Early Intervention or Special Education Services: 2016-2019

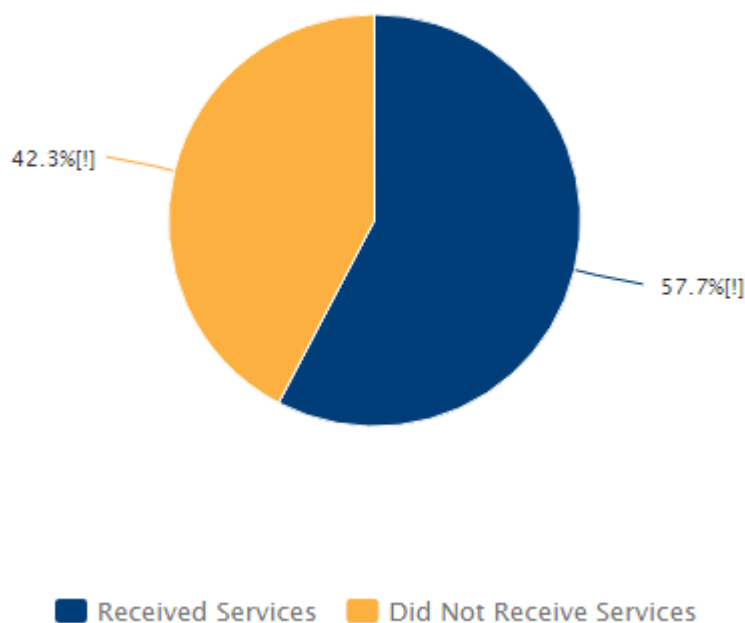
United States	Percent
Received Services	30.4%
Did Not Receive Services	69.6%

California	Percent
Received Services	32.3%[!]
Did Not Receive Services	67.7%[!]

**Definition:** Estimated percentage of children with special health care needs (CSHCN) ages 1-17 who receive and do not receive services under an early intervention or special education plan (e.g., in 2016-2019, 32.3% of California CSHCN received early intervention or special education services).

**Data Source:** U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, [National Survey of Children's Health](#) (Oct. 2020).

## CSHCN Ages 3-17 with Emotional or Behavioral Conditions Receiving Mental Health Services in the Previous Year: 2017-2021 California



**Definition:** Estimated percentage of children with special health care needs (CSHCN) ages 3-17 who have received mental health treatment or counseling in the previous

### What It Is

Children with special health care needs (CSHCN) have or are at increased risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally. On [kidsdata.org](#), indicators related to access to services for CSHCN include:

- Access to a usual source of health care
- Access to a variety of services, including medical, mental, and dental care, as well as community- and school-based services, early intervention, special education, and transition to adulthood services

### Why This Topic Is Important

Nearly 1.4 million California children and youth, and more than 14 million nationwide, have or are at increased risk for a chronic health condition and require care and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally. Their ongoing health problems—physical, behavioral, or developmental—can affect their ability to function and participate in important educational and social activities, and, in some cases, can shorten their lives. Although advances in medical care have extended and improved the lives of millions of children, obtaining timely, appropriate, and affordable care remains a problem for many families. More than 4 in 5 children with special health care needs (CSHCN) statewide and nationally do not receive care that meets federal standards for a well-functioning system. Further, racial/ethnic and socioeconomic inequities in access to care and other supports can lead to poorer outcomes for vulnerable CSHCN and their families.

When compared with children who do not have special health care needs, CSHCN are more likely to experience social-emotional problems, academic challenges, and other types of adversity which can complicate their medical care. As a result, CSHCN often rely on a range of services from multiple sectors, and their parents and family members often face higher caregiving burdens and experience more stress and difficulties with employment and finances when compared with other families.

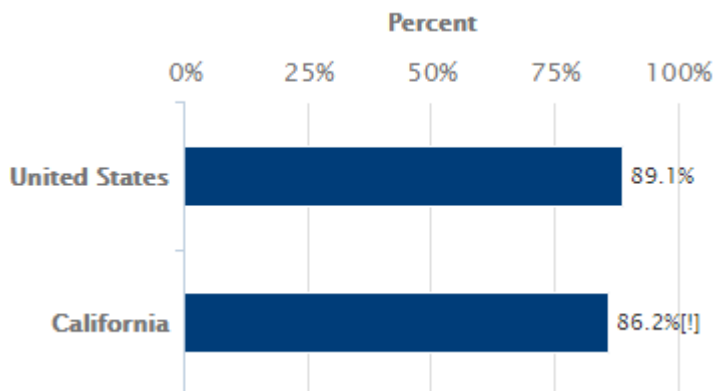
### How Children Are Faring

According to data from parents and caregivers surveyed in 2016, 2017, and 2019, an estimated 86% of California children with

12 months, among those with a current diagnosis of attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety problems, behavioral or conduct problems, or depression (e.g., in 2017-2021, 57.7% of California CSHCN with behavioral or mental health conditions had received treatment or counseling in the previous year).

**Data Source:** U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, National Survey of Children's Health (Mar. 2023).

### CSHCN Ages 0-17 with a Preventive Medical Visit in Previous Year: 2016, 2017, 2019



**Definition:** Estimated percentage of children ages 0-17 with special health care needs (CSHCN) in 2016, 2017, and 2019 who had received a general health check-up in the previous year while not sick or injured (e.g., in 2016-2019, 86.2% of California CSHCN had a preventive medical visit in the previous year). Due to question changes related to receipt of any medical care, 2018 data are not reflected in these estimates.

**Data Source:** U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, National Survey of Children's Health (Oct. 2020).

special health care needs (CSHCN) ages 0-17 had received a preventive health check-up in the previous year. During the four-year period 2016-2019, around one in three California CSHCN ages 1-17 (32%) received services under an early intervention or special education plan. Among CSHCN nationally, estimates of receipt of preventive medical visits and early intervention or special education services were similar.

Among California CSHCN ages 3-17 with one or more provider-diagnosed behavioral or mental health conditions—attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety problems, behavioral or conduct problems, or depression—58% had received treatment or counseling in the previous year, according to 2017-2021 data from the same survey. By comparison, nationwide, 62% of CSHCN with diagnosed conditions had received treatment or counseling in the previous year.

In 2017-2019, more than 48% of responses by staff at California elementary, middle, high, and non-traditional schools reported that services for students with disabilities or other special needs were provided a lot. The share of responses by non-traditional program staff reporting that their school provides services for students with special needs a lot rose from less than 37% in 2011-2013 to more than 48% in 2017-2019.

*View references for this text and additional research on this topic:*

<https://kidsdata.org/topic/13/access-to-services-for-children-with-special-needs/summary>



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