

KXLY.com

Study Could Help Bring More Autism Resources

SPOKANE -- New research published Monday shows about one in every 91 children is diagnosed with Autism, and local Autism advocates hope the new numbers will provide more resources for people struggling with the disability.

The increase is not a surprise at Spokane's Northwest Autism Center, where calls from families seeking help have shot up dramatically since the it opened in 2005.

Carrie-Beth Williams took her son to the Northwest Autism Center when she noticed he was not able to communicate with her, and he could not calm himself down when he was upset.

"Paulie was diagnosed when he was about 18-months-old," said Williams. "He gets fixated on specific toys, specific movies, specific colors of clothing. Yep, that's a constant battle with us."

Research shows that there are more children like Paulie in the United States than previously thought.

A study published in the "Pediatrics" journal indicates the number of children with Autism has doubled since the last government survey in 2003.

"It's the only diagnosis that I know of right now that is growing at such a rapid rate," Williams said.

Shira Ackerman teaches children diagnosed with Autism at the Domino Project, which is a one-of-a-kind preschool in Cheney, Washington that serves Autistic children.

"If those numbers turn out to be as high as they're sounding, then there is even more of a need for us to be able to fund more programs to provide appropriate services," said Domino Project Director Shira Ackerman.

There are normally six developing kids who attend the Domino Project.

"So for, as much of a need as there is out there, we need to be able to provide far more services than what we currently are doing here in the Inland Northwest," Ackerman said.

Without intervention, Williams says her son would not be able to communicate.

"If I ignored my child, he would still be speaking two words a day," said Williams.

She hopes this study gives a voice to those struggling with Autism, and that those with power will listen.

"It is an issue and it's just going to keep growing and growing," Williams said.

Despite the increasing numbers, no one still knows for sure what causes Autism.

© 2009 **KXLY.com**. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without prior permission.