



Mental Health Assessments for Young Children

An Examination of Assessment Trends Following 2022 Policy Changes

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Apple Health's Mental Health Assessment for Young Children (MHAYC)

Beginning in 2022, for mental health assessments for children birth through age 5, Apple Health will:

▶ Allow reimbursement for:



▶ Multi-session assessments



▶ Provider travel to home and community settings

▶ Require providers to:



▶ Use the DC:0-5™

 **Statutory Authority**

[RCW 74.09.520](#) ([2021 c 126 § 2](#)) [WAC 182-531-1400](#)

"Assessment" means the process of obtaining all pertinent bio-psychosocial information, as identified by the person, and family and collateral sources, for determining a diagnosis and to plan individualized services and supports.

([WAC 182-538D-0200](#); [WAC 246-341-0200](#))

Key Findings

- Very **few young children** received **mental health assessments**, even in the years following MHAYC policy changes.
- **Multi-session assessments** became **more common** for young children after MHAYC went into effect.
- The impact of the **COVID-19 pandemic** made it challenging to determine if MHAYC had any influence on **where assessments for young children took place**.
- Some changes were seen in diagnostic patterns for young children during the study period, including a **decrease in diagnoses of Disruptive Behavior Disorders** and an **increase in diagnoses of Developmental Disorders**.

Study Design

Population enrolled in Apple Health, calendar year 2019 to 2023

Study Population

Children ages 0 to 5



Comparison Population

Children ages 6 to 17



Measures of Interest

- Mental health assessment
- Multi-session mental health assessment
- Location of mental health assessment encounters
- Final diagnosis from the mental health assessment

Data Sources

Apple Health medical claims data was used to examine trends in mental health assessment characteristics



- A medical claim or encounter is submitted to the Health Care Authority’s ProviderOne data system and provides detailed information about the **visit** such as:
 - **Date of service**
 - **Procedure** (e.g. Psychiatric diagnostic evaluation; Mental health assessment by a non-physician)
 - **Place of service** (e.g. Office; School; Home; Telehealth)
 - **Diagnosis** (e.g. Post-traumatic stress disorder; Generalized anxiety disorder)
- HCA’s ProviderOne data system includes medical claims for individuals with Apple Health coverage for their covered provider visits

Data Sources

Each measure of interest is based on information from **medical claims**



1. Mental health assessment is identified using 3 procedure codes

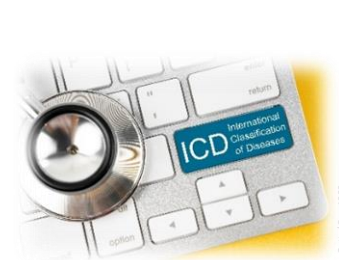
- 90791 - Psychiatric diagnostic evaluation
- 90792 - Psychiatric diagnostic evaluation with medical services
- H0031 - Mental health assessment, by non-physician

2. Multi-session mental health assessment occurs when a client received at least one additional assessment session with the same billing provider within 90 days of the initial assessment session.



3. Location of mental health assessment sessions is identified through place of service codes, which are grouped into 3 broad categories

- Healthcare settings
- Home/community settings
- Via telehealth



4. Final diagnosis from the mental health assessment is identified from the primary diagnosis ICD-10 code (International Classification of Disease, 10th revision) of the last session of an assessment. For example:

- F43.22 - Adjustment disorder with anxiety
- F84.0 - Autistic disorder
- F99 - Mental disorder, not otherwise specified



Q How many children received mental health assessments?

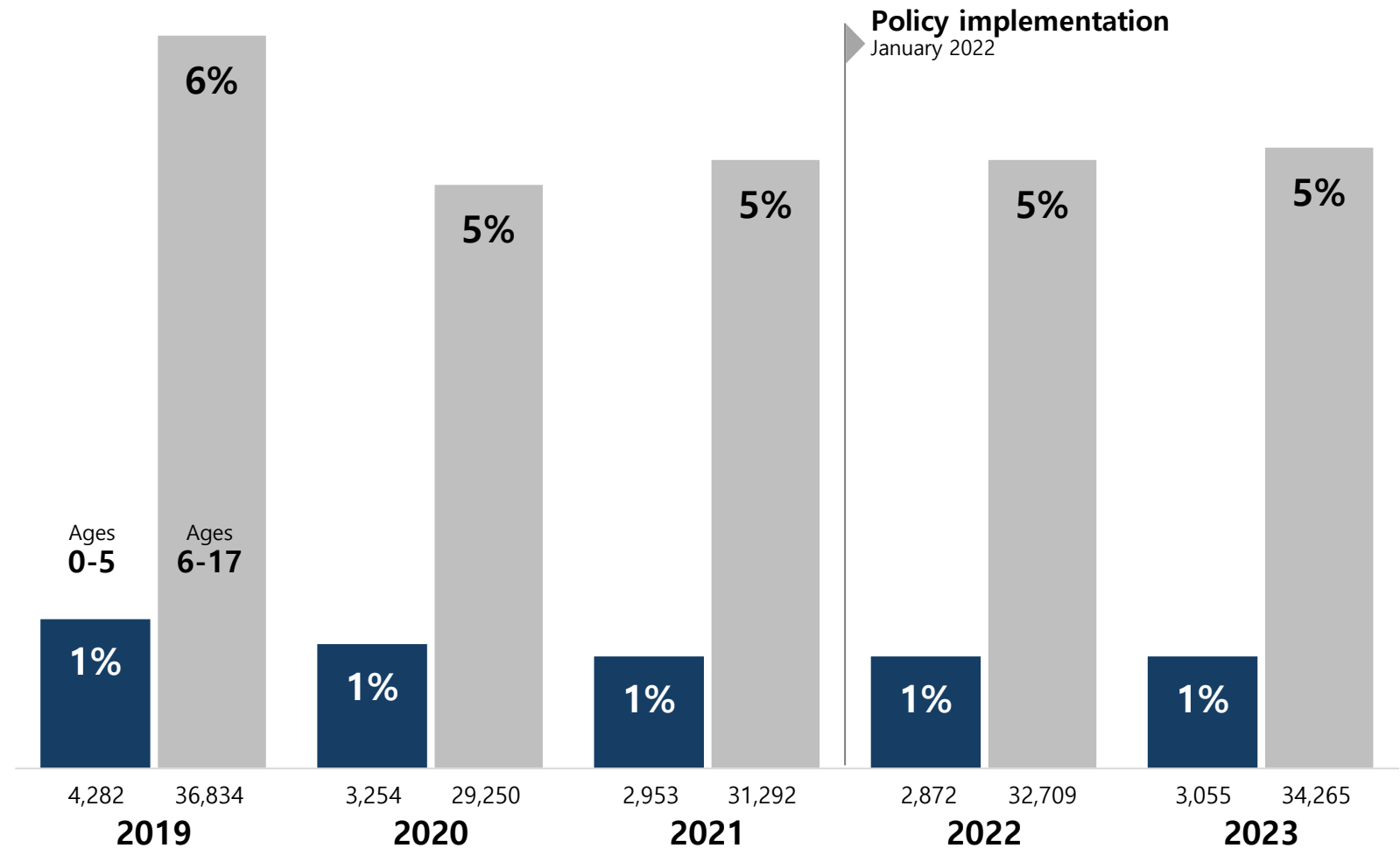
Very **few young children received mental health assessments**, even in the years following MHAYC policy changes.

FIGURE 1

Count and Percent of Children who Received a Mental Health Assessment by Year

Children enrolled in Apple Health

CY 2019 to 2023



SOURCE: ProviderOne data linked in the Integrated Client Databases (ICDB)

Q How common were multi-session assessments?

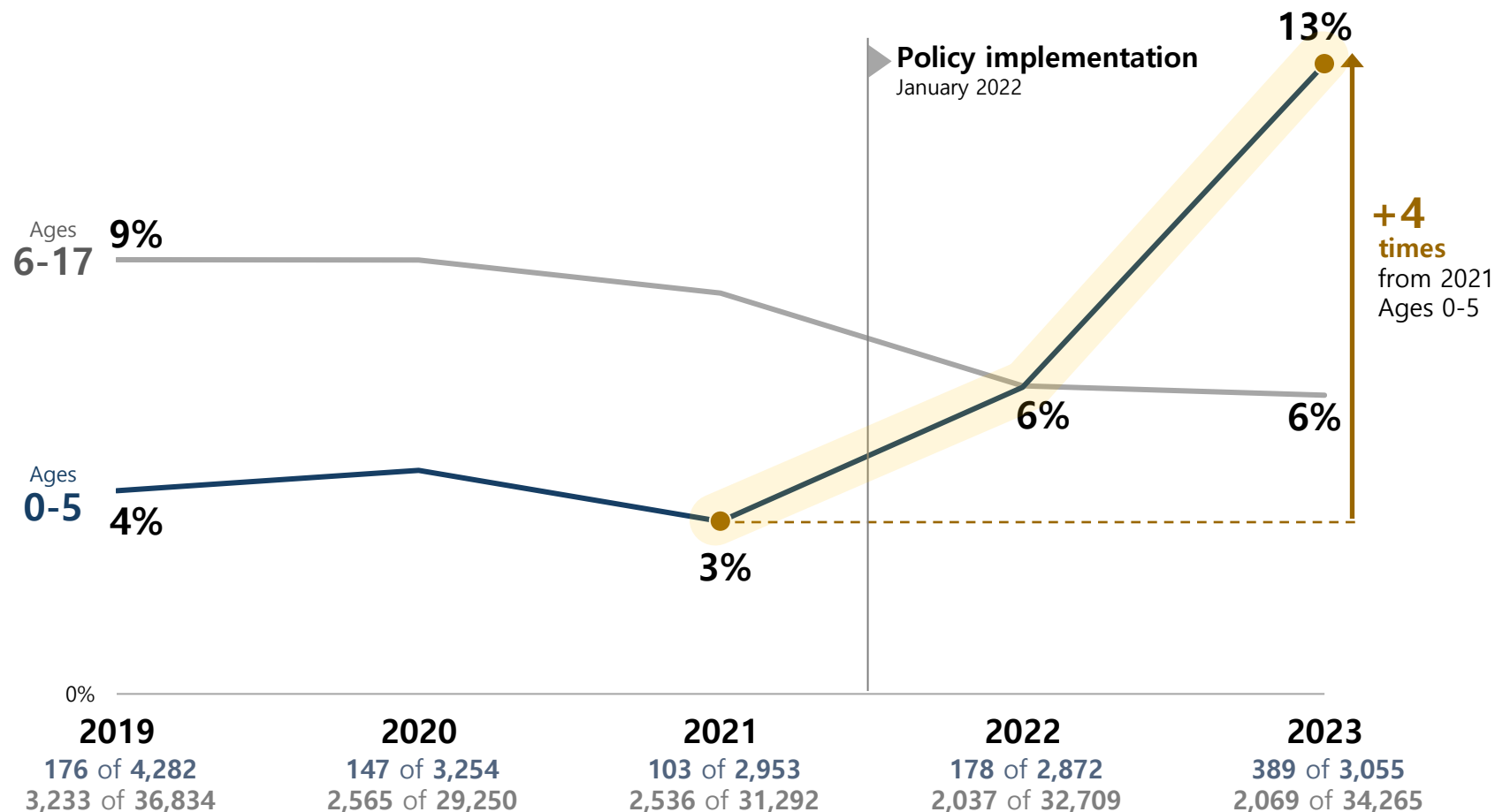
Multi-session assessments became **more common for young children after MHAYC** went into effect.

FIGURE 2

Multi-Session Mental Health Assessments by Year

Children enrolled in Apple Health with a mental health assessment

CY 2019 to 2023



SOURCE: ProviderOne data linked in the Integrated Client Databases (ICDB)

Q Where did mental health assessments take place?

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic made it **challenging to determine if MHAYC had any influence on where** assessments for young children took place.

NOTES: Small numbers of claims for mental health assessment (one-half of a percent or less) are missing the place of service code. Totals may not sum to 100 due to missing codes and due to rounding.



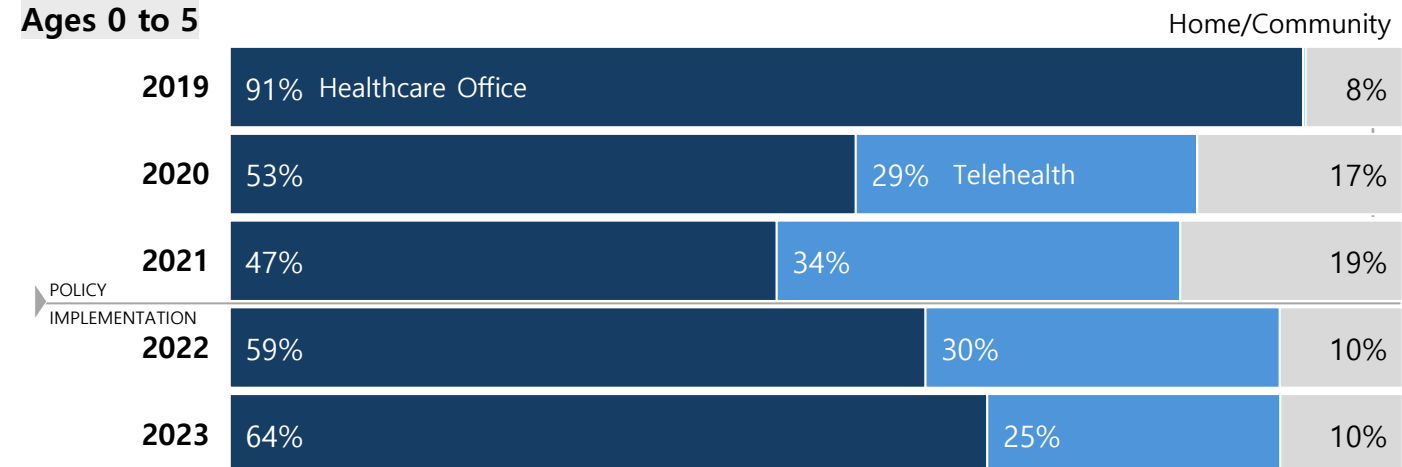
FIGURE 3

Place of Service for Mental Health Assessment Sessions

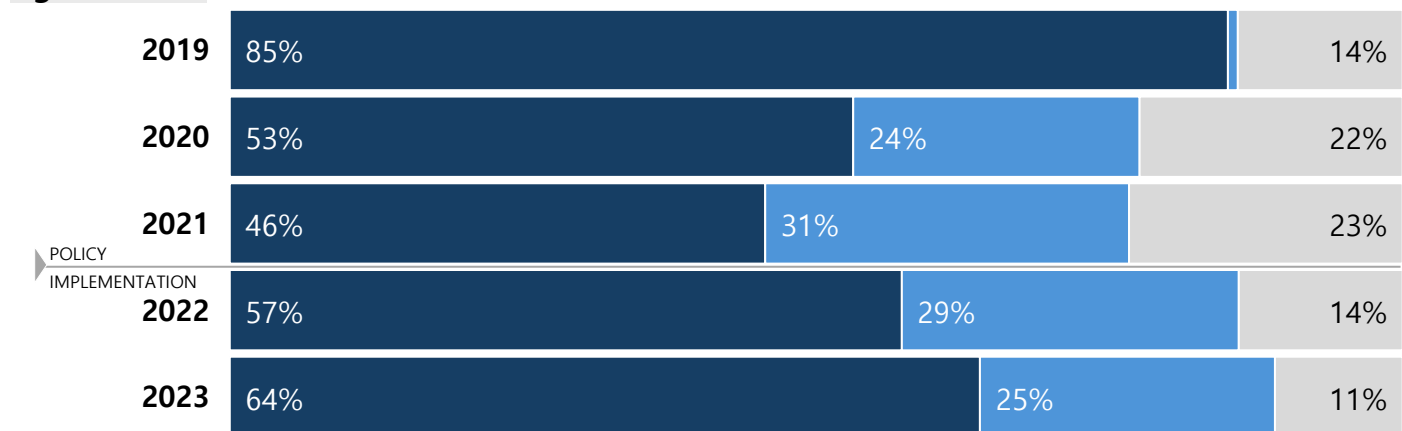
Encounters for mental health assessment sessions among children enrolled in Apple Health

CY 2019 to 2023

Ages 0 to 5



Ages 6 to 17



SOURCE: ProviderOne data linked in the Integrated Client Databases (ICDB)

Q What diagnoses were made on mental health assessments?

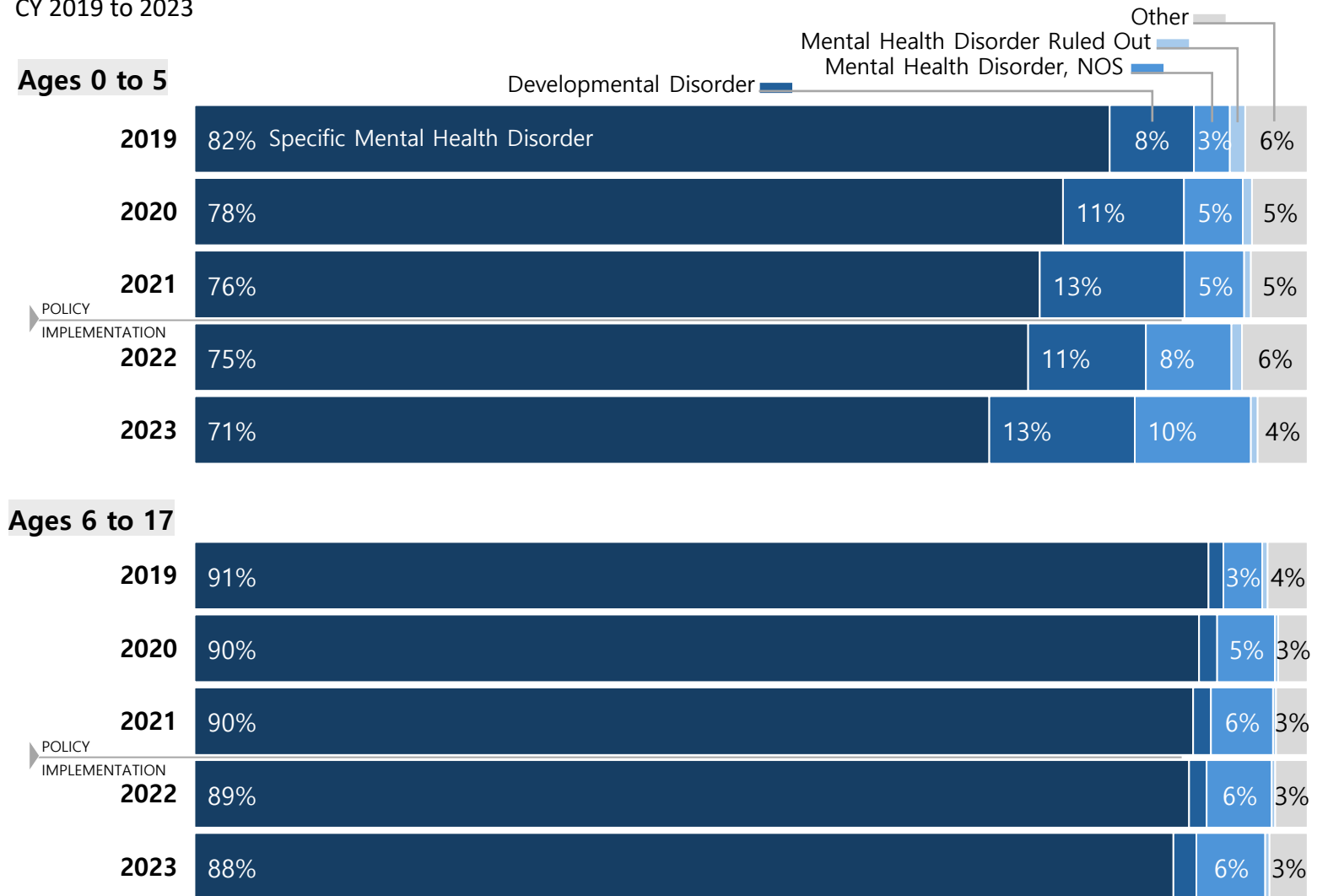
Most mental health assessments led to mental health disorder diagnoses, though **for young children, there were increases in diagnoses of developmental disorders and mental disorder, not otherwise specified (F99).**

FIGURE 4

Final Diagnosis on Mental Health Assessments

Children enrolled in Apple Health with a mental health assessment

CY 2019 to 2023



SOURCE: ProviderOne data linked in the Integrated Client Databases (ICDB)

Q What were the most common Mental Health Disorder diagnoses?

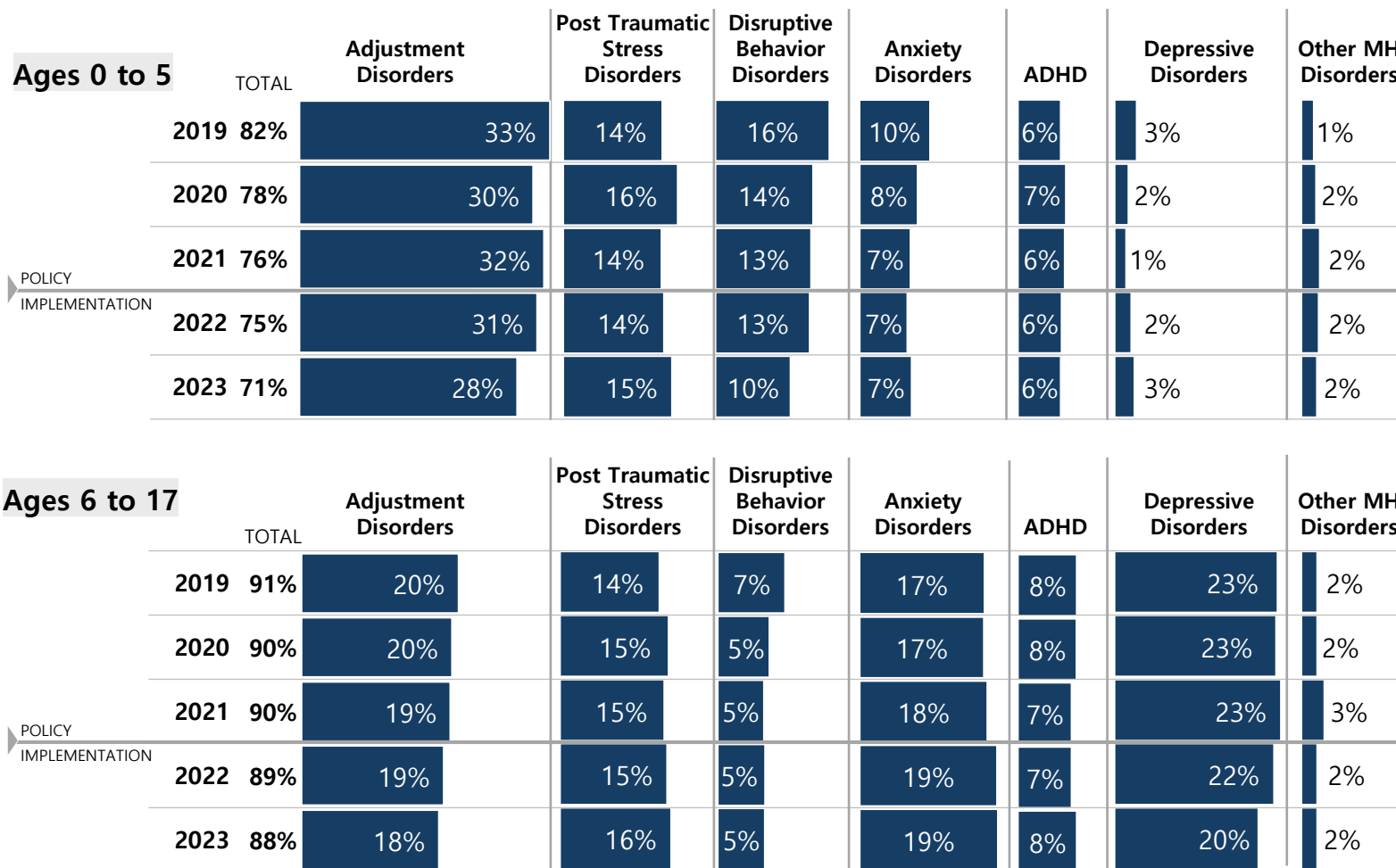
Adjustment disorders were the most commonly diagnosed mental health disorders for young children. Post-traumatic stress disorders and disruptive behavior disorders were also common, but **disruptive behavior disorders declined over time**.

FIGURE 5

Prevalence of Specific Mental Health Disorder Subgroups on Mental Health Assessments

Children enrolled in Apple Health with a mental health assessment

CY 2019 to 2023



NOTES: Percentages in this chart represent the proportion of all mental health assessments with the diagnosis of interest in the year.

SOURCE: ProviderOne data linked in the Integrated Client Databases (ICDB)

Q What were the most common Developmental Disorder diagnoses?

Autism Spectrum Disorders were the most commonly diagnosed developmental disorders for young children.

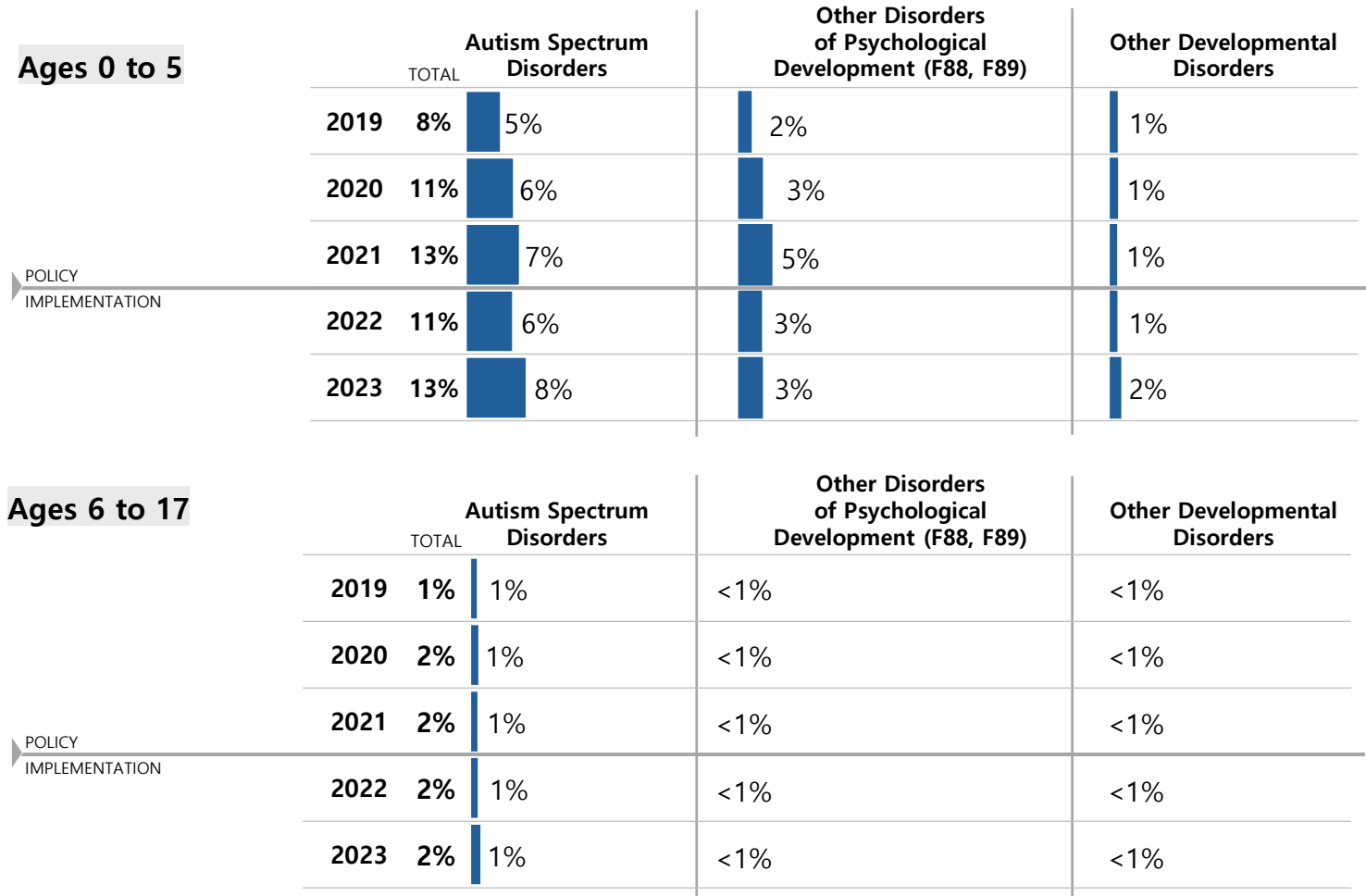
NOTES: Percentages in the chart above/right represent the proportion of all mental health assessments with the diagnosis of interest in the year.

FIGURE 6

Prevalence of Developmental Disorder Subgroups on Mental Health Assessments

Children enrolled in Apple Health with a mental health assessment

CY 2019 to 2023



SOURCE: ProviderOne data linked in the Integrated Client Databases (ICDB)

Future directions for study

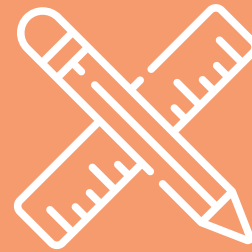
- ▶ **Characteristics of children and families** who received mental health assessments (e.g. gender, race/ethnicity, and geography).
- ▶ Overall **prevalence** of mental health and developmental disorders among young children
- ▶ **Other factors** in administrative data that could indicate a need for mental health services
- ▶ The relationship between assessment and **treatment** services



Broader policy implications



Usefulness
(and limits) of
administrative
data



Impacts of
clear billing
and policy
guidance



Implementation
over time

Questions?

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Upcoming opportunities



Provider Spotlight: IECMH Intake Forms

Date: Oct 23, 2025

Time: 11 a.m. – noon

Register



DC:0-5 Crosswalk Community Review

Due November 1

Give feedback