

# USPSTF finds evidence lacking for autism screening in children

August 4 2015

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(HealthDay)—The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) has concluded that there is currently insufficient evidence to assess the benefits and harms of screening for autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in asymptomatic children age 3 and younger. These findings form the basis of a draft recommendation statement published online Aug. 3 by the USPSTF.

Researchers from the USPSTF reviewed the evidence relating to the benefits and harms of routine ASD [screening](#) in primary care settings. Data were reviewed from 17 studies of screening instruments for use in young (3 years old or younger), unselected populations.

The researchers found insufficient direct evidence on the benefits of screening for ASD in toddlers and preschoolers. Insufficient evidence

was found on the efficacy of treatment of cases of screening-detected ASD. Overall, the current evidence was insufficient to assess the balance of benefits and harms of screening in a population of children who have not been diagnosed with ASD or developmental delay and for whom no concerns have been raised by their parents or clinical providers. The findings form the basis of a recommendation statement, which will be available for comment from Aug. 4 to Aug. 31.

"More [clear evidence](#) is needed before the Task Force can recommend for or against screening all children who don't have any signs of the condition," David Grossman, M.D., M.P.H., vice chair of the USPSTF, said in a statement.

**More information:** [Evidence Review](#)  
[Draft Recommendation Statement](#)  
[Comment on Recommendation](#)

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