

USPSTF: Evidence low for speech delay screen in young children

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(HealthDay)—The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) concludes that there is currently insufficient evidence to weigh the benefits and harms of screening and treating children aged 5 and under for speech and language delays or disorders. These findings form the basis of a draft recommendation statement published online Nov. 17.

Nancy D. Berkman, Ph.D., and colleagues from the University of North Carolina Evidence-based Practice Center in Research Triangle Park, conducted a [systematic review](#) of studies reporting on the benefits and harms of screening, accuracy of screening tools, and benefits or harms of treatment of speech and language delays or disorders.

The researchers found that there was inadequate evidence on the

accuracy of screening instruments for speech and language delays for use in [primary care](#). There was also inadequate evidence for the accuracy of active monitoring in primary care to identify children for further evaluation. There was inadequate evidence relating to the benefits of screening and early intervention, and for the effectiveness of screening for speech and [language delay](#) and disorders on outcomes such as improving speech. These findings form the basis of a draft recommendation statement, which is available for comment from Nov. 18 to Dec. 15.

"Ultimately, we need more research on whether [screening](#) with formal tools in primary care helps identify speech or language problems in young children who weren't previously thought to have problems," USPSTF member Alex Kemper, M.D., M.P.H., said in a statement.

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

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