

# Pediatrician use of developmental screening tools increasing

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(HealthDay)—From 2002 to 2016, there was an increase in

pediatricians' reported use of developmental screening tools and in referral of at-risk patients for early intervention (EI), according to a study published online March 2 in *Pediatrics*.

Paul H. Lipkin, M.D., from the Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore, and colleagues analyzed data from the 2002, 2009, and 2016 American Academy of Pediatrics Periodic Surveys to examine trends in screening and referral of children for developmental problems.

The researchers found that from 2002 to 2016, there was an increase in pediatricians' reported use of developmental screening tools from 21 to 63 percent. On average, pediatricians reported referring 59 percent of their at-[risk patients](#) to EI in 2016, which was an increase from 41 percent in 2002. Compared with 2002, in 2016, pediatricians were more likely to report being very likely to refer a patient with global developmental delay, milestone loss, language delay, sensory impairment, motor delays, and family concern to EI.

"The encouraging results of this study show increased use of standardized developmental screening tools since 2002," the authors write. "However, one-third of pediatricians are not completing standardized screening, with barriers remaining, leaving many children unscreened for [developmental disorders](#) and potentially resulting in delayed identification and treatment of problems that may affect children and families for a lifetime."

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