

Parents, caregivers generally support mental health screening

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Most parents and caregivers support mental health screening for their

child, according to a study published online June 20 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Mirelle Kass, from the Child Mind Institute in New York City, and colleagues examined parents' and caregivers' comfort with and preferences for pediatric mental health screening and factors associated with those preferences in a survey study. Data were obtained from 1,136 parents and caregivers who were aged 21 years or older and had at least one [child](#) aged 5 to 21 years living at home. The final sample included 972 parents and caregivers.

The researchers found that 64.9 percent of participants supported annual mental health screening for their child, and most (89.7 percent) preferred reviewing the screening results with professional staff. Participants were significantly less comfortable with child self-report versus parent-report screening assessments, although they were generally comfortable with both options. Participants were generally comfortable discussing all 21 screening topics on the survey, despite slight variations based on country of residence, screening topic, and [child's age](#). The greatest comfort was seen for sleep problems, while firearms, [gender identity](#), suicidality, and substance use or abuse were the least comfortable topics.

"This study suggests the need to engage both professionals and the public who may benefit from screening and some of the key factors (e.g., screening topics, child age, country of residence, and report option) that may enhance the development of future programs to detect and intervene in [mental disorders](#) in youths," the authors write.

More information: Mirelle Kass et al, Parental Preferences for Mental Health Screening of Youths From a Multinational Survey, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.18892](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.18892)

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