

Clinical Summary: Interventions to Prevent Child Maltreatment

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Population | Children and adolescents 18 years and younger |
| Recommendation | No recommendation. Grade: I (insufficient evidence) |

| | |
|--|--|
| Risk Assessment | Risk factors for maltreatment in children include young age (<4 years), having special health care needs, female sex, and past history of maltreatment. Children are also at increased risk based on factors related to their caregiver or environment, including having young, single, or nonbiological parents or parents with poor educational attainment, low income, history of maltreatment, and social isolation. Additionally, living in a community with high rates of violence, high rates of unemployment, or weak social networks are linked to child maltreatment. |
| Interventions | Although the USPSTF found insufficient evidence to recommend for or against preventive interventions in primary care settings, several strategies for preventing child abuse and neglect have been studied. Specific interventions include primary care programs designed to identify high-risk patients and refer them to community resources, parent education to improve nurturing and increase the use of positive discipline strategies, and psychotherapy to improve caregivers' coping skills and strengthen the parent-child relationship. These interventions are delivered in settings such as the patient's home, primary care clinics, schools, and the community. |
| Relevant USPSTF Recommendations | The USPSTF has a recommendation on screening for intimate partner violence, elder abuse, and abuse of vulnerable adults. |

For a summary of the evidence systematically reviewed in making this recommendation, the full recommendation statement, and supporting documents, please go to <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org>.