

# Understanding Task Force Draft Recommendations

This fact sheet explains the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force's (Task Force) draft recommendation statement on screening for speech and language delay and disorders in children. It also tells you how you can send comments about the draft recommendation to the Task Force. Comments may be submitted from July 25, 2023, to August 21, 2023. The Task Force welcomes your comments.

## Screening for Speech and Language Delay and Disorders in Children

The Task Force issued a **draft recommendation statement** on *Screening for Speech and Language Delay and Disorders in Children*.

The Task Force found that there is not enough evidence to make a recommendation for or against screening children 5 years and younger who do not show any signs of speech and language delays and disorders.

This recommendation is not for children who show signs or whose caregivers or healthcare professionals raise concerns about speech and language. It is important that caregivers with concerns related to their child's speech and language development talk to a primary care professional so these children can get the care they need.

### Facts About Speech and Language Delay and Disorders

Speech and language delay and disorders can be challenging for children and their families and can lead to difficulties with reading and writing as children age. Speech or language delay is when a child develops speech and language at a slower-than-expected rate, whereas a disorder is when a child's speech and language are not developing normally (for example, difficulty with forming specific sounds or words correctly).

There are several risk factors that have been reported to be associated with speech and language delay and disorders, such as male sex, having a family history of speech and language issues, low parental education level, and other factors such as premature birth, low birth weight, and birth difficulties. Additionally, some children may be more likely to experience speech and language delay, such as Black, Latino, and Native American children, as well as children in households with low incomes.



#### What is speech and language delay?

When a child develops speech and language at a slower rate than expected.

#### What are speech and language disorders?

When a child's speech or language is different from typical development.

# Screening for Speech and Language Delay and Disorders in Children

## Potential Benefits and Harms of Screening for Speech and Language Delay and Disorders

The potential benefit of screening for speech and language delay and disorders in primary care would be to improve school performance, social and emotional health, or child and family well-being. However, there is limited evidence on the benefits of screening children who do not show signs, so the Task Force is calling for more research.

There is also not enough evidence to determine if there are harms associated with screening children who do not have signs or symptoms of speech and language delay or disorders. Potential harms of screening include the time, effort, and anxiety associated with further testing after a positive screen, as well as the potential social and emotional harms associated with diagnosis.

## The Draft Recommendation on Screening for Speech and Language Delay and Disorders: What Does It Mean?

Here is the Task Force's draft recommendation on screening for speech and language delay and disorders in children. The recommendation is based on the quality and strength of the evidence about the potential benefits and harms of screening for this purpose. It is also based on the size of the potential benefits and harms. Task Force recommendation grades are explained in the box at the end of this fact sheet.

When the Task Force issues an **I statement**, it means that there is not enough evidence to recommend for or against the preventive service.

Before you send comments to the Task Force, you may want to read the **draft recommendation statement**. The recommendation statement explains the evidence the Task Force reviewed and how it decided on the grade. An **evidence document** provides more detail about the scientific studies the Task Force reviewed.

**1** The USPSTF concludes that the **current evidence is insufficient** to assess the balance of benefits and harms of screening for **speech** and **language delay** and **disorders** in children aged 5 years or younger.

### **I Statement**

## Notes

### **1** **current evidence is insufficient**

There is not enough evidence to make a recommendation for or against screening.

#### **speech**

The act of forming sounds and words.

#### **language**

Getting and giving information verbally, understanding, and being understood.

#### **delay**

When a child develops speech and language more slowly than normal.

#### **disorders**

When a child's speech and language ability are not developing normally.

# Screening for Speech and Language Delay and Disorders in Children

## What is the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force?

The Task Force is an independent, non-federal, volunteer group of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine. The Task Force works to improve the health of people nationwide by making evidence-based recommendations about clinical preventive services, such as screenings, counseling services, and preventive medicines. The recommendations apply to people with no signs or symptoms of the disease being discussed.

To develop a recommendation statement, Task Force members consider the best available science and research on a topic. For each topic, the Task Force posts draft documents for public comment, including the **draft recommendation statement**. All comments are reviewed and considered in developing the final recommendation statement. To learn more, visit the **Task Force website**.

[Click Here to Learn More About Speech and Language Delay and Disorders](#)

### **Speech and Language Developmental Milestones**

(National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)

### **Language and Speech Disorders in Children**

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

USPSTF Recommendation Grades	
Grade	Definition
A	Recommended.
B	Recommended.
C	Recommendation depends on the patient's situation.
D	Not recommended.
<b>I statement</b>	There is not enough evidence to make a recommendation.

## [Click Here to Comment on the Draft Recommendation](#)



The Task Force welcomes comments on these draft recommendations.



Comments must be received between July 25, 2023, and August 21, 2023.



All comments will be considered for use in writing final recommendations.