

Children showing signs of autism should be treated before diagnosis is confirmed, under new guidelines

Pediatricians should start treating children who show signs of [autism](#) even before tests confirm a diagnosis, according to the newest recommendations from the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#).

The recommendations, the first overhaul in 12 years, come from a scientific working group in consultation with clinicians and family groups.

Some of the guidelines address known problems in autism services, such as [long delays in diagnosis](#) and inconsistent evidence for [behavioral therapies](#).

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This emphasis on early treatment is one of the report's "exciting and important" elements, says Sarabeth Broder-Fingert, assistant professor of pediatrics at Boston University, who was not involved in creating the report.

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The report also calls for pediatricians to monitor [conditions that often accompany autism](#) and help families plan for the [transition to adulthood](#).

The recommendations for [identifying autistic children](#) remain the same: Conduct regular surveillance for autism traits during routine checkups and perform formal screenings at 18 and 24 months of age. The report suggests that pediatricians should also develop better screens to improve early diagnosis among [minority populations](#) and those whose first language is not English.

The recommendations do not call for drastic changes overall, but they are welcome, Broder-Fingert says.

Read full, original post: [New U.S. autism guidelines call for early treatment](#)