



U.S. Preventive Services Task Force

Literature Surveillance Report

Title: Screening for Speech and Language Delay and Disorders in Children Aged 5 Years or Younger

Literature Surveillance Date: April 2019

Recommendation Summary: In 2015, the USPSTF concluded that the current evidence was 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 (Grade: **I statement**).

Summary of New Evidence: Literature scans were conducted in the MEDLINE, ERIC, and PubMed databases and the Cochrane Library. Results were limited to articles in English language and in core and specialty journals that were published 2014 to present.

Systematic Reviews

We found no systematic reviews related to screening for speech and language delay or disorders. A 2016 Cochrane review of speech and language therapy interventions to improve the speech of children with dysarthria (search through July 2015) identified no randomized, controlled trial that met inclusion criteria.¹

Primary Studies

We identified a single study addressing screening for developmental language disorder; however, it was conducted in first- and second-grade classrooms, where most children are older than 5 years.²

We identified seven relevant studies of interventions for young children with speech or language delay or disorders, with sample sizes ranging from 29 to 394.³⁻⁹ The interventions studied include co-speech gesturing, oral language skills, play-based language and speech exercises, and computer-assisted input-based programs for language feedback and training. Outcomes reported in these studies include oral language skills, receptive language skills, improved syntax, and phonological processing. One study also reported the effects of the intervention on well-being,⁶ and one study focused on bilingual children with language impairment.⁹ It is unclear if any of these studies included children with screen-detected speech or language delay or disorders.

References

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